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Not long ago one of the most noted story-writers in the world wrote to the editor of ROMANCE, saying, "One of the best stories that I ever read was called 'Mickle-Mouthed Meg.' I wish you could reprint it, but I have not seen it for many years, and am unable to give you its author's name or any clue by which you might find it." It chanced that in a series of story scrap-books compiled many years ago, this story has been found. It is by T. C. Spaulding.

MICKLE-MOUTHED MEG.

THE feuds of the Scottish clans are a proverbial part and parcel of the history of Scotland. When not at war with England, the Scotch have delighted to pick some petty quarrel with each other, and the occasion has often been too trifling to mention in history, while the consequences have often risen to matters of deep, and sometimes fatal, importance. But underneath all this, some comic characteristic of the nation has peeped out—some ill-concealed craft or cunning, or close-handed thrift, indicative of the canny Scotsman, and which belong to no other people in such excess as to those of the "Border."

One of these feuds, now existing only in traditionary lore, lay between the Scotts and Murrays; and, at one time, it seemed only too probable that the representative of the former clan would meet a disgraceful death at the hands of the chief of the latter.

Sir Gideon Murray, the Laird of Elibank, was a chosen favorite of King James VI., who afterward bestowed upon him the office of deputy treasurer of Scotland. The Laird was an honest, upright man, but subject to fits of passion, which, however, seldom lasted long, and in the end rarely did anybody any harm. His wife was a careful, painstaking woman, a good wife and mother, and, in her youth, must have been esteemed a fair specimen of Scotch beauty. At the age of fifty, the time of which we write, she was still bright and blooming, her fair, yellowish hair still untouched by the frosts of

time, and her good-natured smile displaying teeth of the purest white, without thanks to the dentist, even had his art flourished at that period.

The good dame was very fond of brilliant colors, and besides the endless variety of tartans with which she decked herself—wearing not only her husband's colors, but those of her mother's family and of her own maiden name—she enhanced the effect by numberless pink, bright red or corn-colored cap-ribbons; so that the good gentlewoman gave the appearance of a flower-garden.

Good-looking as the Lady of Elibank incontestably was, no one could say as much for the three daughters, who were the sole heirs of Sir Gideon, all his sons having, to his great disappointment, died in infancy. We may, however, except one as being tolerably pretty. Of these daughters, Ailie, the eldest, was a red-haired, freckle-faced lassie, large and awkward, with the dullest of all blue eyes, "like pewter buttons drappit in a crock o' white butter," the lads said.

The second, Jean, was a prim, bony, old-maidish woman, still and quiet, hardly speaking the day through, except to warn her sisters that they were talking too loudly.

The youngest daughter was fair and well-formed, and as merry and sunny as the day is long; but, in spite of a pair of bright blue eyes, and a straight nose, her face was made homely by a mouth so wide and thick-lipped that she was known from her earliest childhood by the sobriquet of "Mickle-Mouthed Meg," all over Elibank Town, and indeed wherever the Laird and his family were known. No one was more sensible of her looks than Meg herself. She declared that she was afraid to gape, or even sing, lest her head should be divided into two parts—and she often expressed a hope that in heaven she would not be recognized by her mouth. This sunny disposition was everything to the Murray family. It softened the asperities of poor Jean, whose youth had suffered a sad disappointment, and it made amends by its kindness for the thoughtless and awkward rudeness of Ailie. It covered over the absurdities

of Lady Murray's costume, and it was more than an even match for the Laird's passionate temper; subduing it by softness only, as the horse-tamer rules his fiery subjects. Yet the good and amiable Scottish maiden was invariably called by her uninviting nickname, and the young Lairds never toasted the neighboring beauties without bringing in Mickle-Mouthed Meg as a foil to the loveliness of their own charmers.

Meg had her own admirers. The gardener's lame boy, from his arm-chair by the window, and his little table loaded with books and pictures, cakes and fruits, the gift of Margaret Murray, never failed to hail her coming as that of his guardian angel; and old, decrepit Sawny Macintire, the schoolmaster of Elibank when Sir Gideon was a young man, could never be made to think that Meg was not a perfect beauty; and when he had exhausted every old Latin epithet upon the child of his former pupil, and the youths continued to laugh disdainfully at the amplitude of her mouth, Sawny would say, "Hech, sirs! but the lassie's heart is as muckle as a haill regiment of such as your ain."

Meg had just entered her twenty-fifth year, when her father came home suddenly from the next town, where he had been on business, and alarmed the family with the news that he had heard. Young William Scott, the son of Scott of Harden, was already making large incursions upon lands belonging to the Laird of Elibank, and his depredations were made in open defiance of all law, and in a manner worthy of the most lawless freebooter; at least such was the story heard by the Laird, and by him believed true.

To sound the alarm among the Laird's retainers, to summon the whole clan of Murray, and to defeat the marauders through superior force, was the old knight's easy task. Another seemed coming upon him to execute, which, after the heat of passion and the flush of victory should be over, would perhaps load his whole life with unavailing remorse.

Young Scott of Harden was taken prisoner and brought to Elibank Town, where he was confined in a

room in Sir Gideon's own castle, until lawful measures could be taken to punish him. Having deposited his prisoner in safety, the Knight of Elibank betook himself to the presence of his lady, to report his deeds of martial prowess in rescuing a flock of sheep from the clutches of the borderers.

Magnificent, in a new head-dress, decorated with purple thistles and enormous white lilies, Lady Murray heard her husband's boast of his warlike deeds, and congratulated him warmly upon preserving his mutton from the mouths which it was never intended to supply. Still, she knew Scott of Harden, and she could not help feeling sorry that so fine a young man should have been mixed up with such an affair.

"What are ye gaen to do wi' him, Elibank?" she asked.

"Do wi' him?" asked the Laird, with an expression more nearly resembling scorn than she had ever seen him wear. "*Do* wi' him? What he deserves. I took him, red hand, in the very act of violence and plunder. I will bring him to the gallows where he belongs; and I wish his whole train had but one neck, so that I could stretch them all at once."

"Hoot, na, Elibank—that is no so wise as ye are betimes. Scott of Harden is a winsome young Laird. Would ye hang such as he, when ye ha' three ill-faured dochters in the house?"

The Laird looked at his wife with a half-angry, half-foolish look.

"You were ever quicker to think of anything than I, Grizel," he said, softening down at the new aspect of things that presented itself through her words. "You are right," he continued, after a pause, in which he seemed to be weighing the question of having a border thief, as he had called the young Scott, for a son-in-law; "you are right, Grizel, my bonny woman; he shall take Mickle-Mouthed Meg for his wife, or *strap* for it. Meg is not so well-favored as her mother, but she is far too good for Scott of Harden."

And the Laird of Elibank actually went to his pris-

oner, and offered him life and liberty and the hand of his daughter.

Scott of Harden had too often heard the three Elibank damsels made the subject of mirth among the young Lairds of his acquaintance to relish the thoughts of marrying one of them, and being thereby subject to such ridicule as he knew must attach to him, and he quietly rejected Sir Gideon's proposal, in as few words as possible.

The Laird of Elibank was powerful in his position of favorite at court, the prisoner had his life at his option, and he obstinately refused to profit by it. So—on a day when all nature seemed to rejoice in the glory of its Creator, when sky and sea and earth were all arrayed in beauty, and it seemed happiness enough to exist—the young and handsome Laird was led out to die. An ugly, creeping sensation came over him, as he, in imagination, felt the rope about his neck, but he was brave, and had that strong determination that is born of obstinacy, and he kept on his way, with a Highlander, well-armed, keeping fast hold of him, on each side.

Young Harden had no such thought. Just before they reached the public square, where the hateful gibbet was erected, the procession had to pass the Castle of Elibank, as Sir Gideon loved to designate the old hall in which his ancestors had lived two centuries ago. It had a tower and parapet, it is true, and the knight loved to keep a horde of retainers, but his mansion hardly attained to the dignity of castellated grandeur, and its general designation was simply Elibank Hall. Past Elibank Hall, therefore, the dismal troop wended its slow march. The prisoner involuntarily cast his eyes upward, when close upon it, and in a moment the tide of feeling in his whole being rushed lifeward.

At a window of Elibank Hall, in the upper portion of the house, sat a lady, whose repeated applications of her handkerchief to her eyes betrayed that she was weeping. She seemed to have gone up thither to escape observation, the lower windows and balconies of

the house being crowded with people assembled to see the winsome Laird of Harden dragged to execution. Far above these thronging witnesses, the prisoner's eye was raised, and his glance took in a form and face that, but for a single fault, would have been considered perfect. Gentleness and goodness sat enthroned in the face, and the throat, neck, and shoulders were such as a sculptor might delight in copying. Only the mouth was too wide, but the lips were full, rich, and rose-red, and the mouth was redeemed from ugliness by the beautiful expression of mute sorrow that lingered around it.

At such a moment, this expression of sympathy was more and dearer to him who was about to lay down his life than the most perfect beauty that the world ever saw. A moment more, and their eyes met. As if entirely abandoned to her feelings, the lady at the window suddenly rose, leaned from the narrow sill, and stretched out her arms as if entreating him to come back to life and to her. Impelled by a sentiment unknown before, the prisoner threw up his white, emaciated hands toward her, as if answering her signal.

Before the procession had half gone by, Margaret Murray was in her father's library, whither he had gone to remain alone until the sad scene should be over. Already he had buried every particle of enmity against the poor youth. Already he would have given worlds to hold him back to life. To weigh this young man's existence—his bright, free, glad life—against that of a few sheep! He felt that he was guilty of murder, and when poor Meg came in with streaming eyes, and knelt at his feet, begging him to go to him once more for *her* sake, he could not refuse to heed her.

Sir Gideon was large and unwieldy, and the morning was warm. He hurried as fast as possible, the streams of perspiration on his face attesting to his exertions. Meg watched him, and her heart failed her. She knew the hour that was to witness the fatal deed, and it only wanted a few minutes.

Would he get there in time? Oh, the agony of a moment on which the life of a human being turns! Her

father was scarcely out of sight when the hour struck from the tower of Elibank Kirk.

"Too late! too late!" cried poor Margaret; and she went back to her chamber, to avoid seeing any of the curious multitude who, on account of her father's connection with the affair, had congregated at Elibank Hall.

Weeping and fatigue—for Margaret had not rested for a whole week, so excited had she been—had worn her down so that only the last straw was needed to put the finishing stroke to her life. Fortunately, she fainted, and forgot in insensibility the trial she had undergone.

She awoke with father, mother and sisters around her bed, each striving to do something for her recovery. Even the precise Jean had been weeping, and Margaret thought it was perhaps as much for the poor young Laird's death as for herself that Jean wept. She wondered to see her father look so calm, with a man's death resting upon his conscience.

But she had revived, was prepared to brave the worst news she could hear, and which it would seem that all were unwilling to tell her—for, one by one, they all slipped out and left her alone with her father.

"Poor lassie!" said he, more tenderly than he was wont to speak to his children, "it has been hard upon you to bear this. I only did what I thought was right, and you must try to forgive me for the shame I brought upon you in being refused——"

"Say no more about it, father. I would have been glad indeed to have purchased that young man's life at the expense of tenfold the disappointment or shame as you call it. I do not call it so; for surely any man has a right to refuse a hamely, ill-looking lassie as your Maggie, with her thick lips and wide mouth. But O father! you will, I fear, see this day's sad sight forever before you. I am fain to shut my ain een lest I should see him before me. And, father, he was a man well worth looking at and saving. It was hard to see him going to his death, but I pity you more than I do him."

"When you have said your say, just leave off, will you, Meg? You are evidently a little wandering in

your wits, and as there is a doctor in the next room, I think I will call him in."

He rose and went out before she could remonstrate; and when he returned, he brought in a gentleman whom in the dusk she did not recognize.

"This is the person who called forth your tears to-day, lassie," said the Laird of Elibank roughly, but not unkindly. "He may do more toward your recovery than I can, so I will leave you together." And looking steadily through the gathering gloom, Margaret saw that the figure which stood beside her couch was the same that had walked between the two Highland guards in that sad procession of the morning.

What passed between them is one of the secrets of the past; but one thing we know, that the Laird of Harden and Margaret Murray were married in Elibank Kirk as soon as the bans had been published the usual time. Farther, too, we know that the marriage proved happy beyond the ordinary lot of mortals.

What was better than all was that the long-cherished feud between the Scotts and Murrays was entirely at an end from this time. The father and son-in-law became fast friends, and such was the confidence which the Laird of Elibank placed in Scott of Harden that, when he was obliged to leave Scotland, he left him in the management of all his affairs.

Acting as his representative, too, he carried five hundred of the clan of Scott to the assistance of Johnstone at the bloody battle of Dryffe Sands.

As the Lady of Harden, Margaret Murray was soon unknown by the title which fools had given her. The full red lips always disclosed the sweetest of smiles; and her husband, proud of her sterling worth and virtue, and feelingly alive to the love which she had conceived for him in what he once considered his death-hour, never ceased to repay that love by an affection as fond and tender as her own—affection such as stretches pigmies into height, and shortens giants into ordinary mortals, and converts the homeliest face into the face of an angel.

It is the theory of the great mass of discriminating critics that, so long as a story is refined, entertaining and intelligent, its probability should not be too closely questioned. The grotesque, the extravagant and the supernatural belong quite as properly to legitimate literature as do the analytical and the realistic. The idea of the new school,—that absolute truth to life is the only test of the value of fiction,—would rule out of literature almost every great novelist who ever lived—certainly Scott, Dickens and Bulwer, of a former generation, and our own Stockton, to say nothing of Barrie, whose chief novel has more of romantic melodrama in it than of realism. The application of these remarks to the following very interesting and well-performed literary excursion by the Countess of Munster, in *London Society*, may be made by the reader.

THE CRIME OF PRINCESS LIPETSKA.

"AHI! La bella signorina! e pallidetta! e stanca! poverina!"

These words were addressed to me years ago by the padrona of a hotel, which my mother and I had just reached, after a long and fatiguing night journey; and trivial as they may appear, I remember them distinctly, as well as every other circumstance that occurred during the eventful four-and-twenty hours which succeeded our arrival at the Hotel d'Oro, in Florence, on the 17th September, 184–.

My lately widowed mother and myself (a girl of seventeen) had been travelling in Italy for months, after an aimless, erratic fashion; for she, poor soul, was endeavoring, through change of scene and fatigue of body, to deaden the memory of her grief; and we had started the night before from A——, to avoid the heat of a day journey, arriving in the early morning at the Hotel d'Oro, an imposing building, situated on the banks of the Arno, and formerly a palace of the Este and Borgia families, whose quaint monograms and devices ornamented its walls, both within and without.

The visitors' apartments on the first floor of the Hotel d'Oro opened upon the hanging gallery, and we

were conducted to ours through a doorway concealed by a heavy piece of tapestry.

"Is the signora satisfied?" asked the padrona, as with pardonable pride she threw open the door of a spacious and beautiful salon, with French windows, opening upon a delightfully roomy balcony.

"Oh, yes," answered my mother; "but pray take us at once to our sleeping rooms, for we are very tired."

The padrona took the hint, and led us to two rooms (leading out of the salon and into each other), which were beautifully furnished, but one was so small that I indignantly exclaimed, "Mamma! I really can't sleep in a box!—and in this heat too!"

"Have you any other room you could give Lady Muriel?" my mother asked the padrona, who reflected for a moment and then said:

"I have, signora. It belongs to a suite of rooms prepared for the Russian Princess Lipetska and her sick son and attendants, whom we expect in a few hours; but the doctor, who engaged them, desired us to shut up three or four of the bedrooms, as there were too many; so Lady Muriel's maid could sleep there also—close to her—just across the gallery."

My mother said, "If you are sure you have a right to give her these rooms, that will do perfectly." So all being satisfactorily arranged, I betook myself to my apartment, accompanied by the padrona; but when first I entered it, my spirits (generally daring to a fault) went down to zero. The room was so large, so gloomy! The walls were hung with dingy tapestry, which trembled and flapped each time that a door was shut or one walked across the room; making the grotesque and hideous figures represented upon it seem instinct with life and with an agony of eagerness ready to leap from the walls, and proffer me a dreadful welcome! The bed, too, was far from reassuring in its ghost-like grandeur. It was a carved oak "four-poster"; an ivory and ebony crucifix was nailed at its head, the curtains were dark green velvet, and plumes of feathers waved at each corner of the canopy, being constantly stirred by mys-

terious gusts of air, and emitting a rustling sound suggestive of dead leaves—melancholy in the extreme. Added to all this I counted five doors in the room, and the padrona, noticing my uneasy glances toward them, assured me they were locked, proving her words by pushing and pulling them violently while turning the handles, at the same time talking volubly in Italian. I was, of course, obliged, after the good lady's exertions, to profess myself satisfied, and she was just leaving the room, when the bell which hung in the court-yard began to ring, and the padrona, running with apologies to my balcony, which overhung the grand entrance, called out hastily:

"Lady Muriella! Vede! Ecco la principessa ed il principe! guarda!" and then hurried downstairs. I ran and looked out, and true enough, the Russians had arrived, hours before they were expected, and with much curiosity I watched them as they alighted. There were several clumsy vehicles, each drawn by three horses; the princess and her lady occupying the first. The princess was helped out of her carriage by two footmen (the exact counterpart of each other), having greasy Kalmuck faces, flat noses, and eyes à la chinoise, but she seemed tall and finely-formed, with a clear, pale complexion, tawny-colored hair and eyelashes (the latter being unusually thick and long), and she walked with singular dignity as she entered the hotel.

The occupants of the second vehicle (a sort of invalid carriage) greatly interested me. First a priest, with lowering face and shovel hat, and who had seemingly descended from one of the carriages at the rear, entered the bed-carriage and proceeded to hand out a bag, some pillows, and a fur rug; then giving a sign to the footmen, they scrambled up the carriage steps like performing monkeys, and slowly and carefully drew forth the long, lanky legs of a boy about sixteen, whose shoulders and head were supported by a serious-looking young man, who, I subsequently learned, was an English doctor. The young prince seemed very ill, for he neither spoke nor moved, and took no notice of any one.

I was eager to see his face, but both doctor and priest were determined he should not be exposed to the vulgar gaze, for his cap was pulled over his eyes, and his figure was enveloped in a large shawl; but as he was being disengaged from the carriage, his head fell backward, and his cap slipped off, and in his anxiety to catch it, one of the servants entangled his foot in the shawl, dragging it completely off; and although the priest hastily replaced it and the cap (casting meanwhile a withering look at the terrified menial), he did not prevent my having a momentary view of the thin face and emaciated figure of the sick boy. He was deadly pale, his eyes were closed, and he appeared unconscious of all around; till, strangely, and for an instant (during the excitement caused by the loss of his cap), I fancied he slightly opened his eyes—and looked at me! but he was carried in so quickly that I could not be sure.

I felt no further interest in the occupants of the other carriages, but I longed to see all I could of the prince and his strange entourage; so I crept into the gallery overlooking the marble hall, and waited; knowing that, as his apartments were next to mine, the prince must pass that way.

As I leaned over the gallery balustrade, watching, I fancied there seemed some delay, some consternation in the hall, among the attendants, but I was too far off to make out the cause; at last, however, I saw them coming, carrying the prince up the stair, upon a stretcher. I ran back and hid myself behind my own door, to see them go by.

It was quite a procession. First came the princess (how beautiful she was, and how arrogant she looked!) and by her side was the priest, talking in low, agitated whispers, while she appeared to listen in proud, sullen silence. Then the seemingly inanimate body was carried past by the doctor (whose face was deathly pale) and some servants. As the prince and his bearers passed, I involuntarily moved out of my hiding-place, and the doctor, perceiving me, started slightly, and

again I thought the sick boy's heavy eyelids quivered and slightly unclosed! He was followed by a troop of dirty, savage-looking servants, who chattered noisily in some guttural tongue as they walked, until the priest turned and frowned them into silence.

All excitement being now over, I lay down and endeavored to sleep, but my mind would not rest; so after tossing about uneasily for an hour or two, I rose and ran in to my mother, and as I was relating to her all I had seen, the padrona knocked and anxiously craved an interview, and began a long story, speaking so rapidly in Italian that I could not understand her, but my mother, being a good linguist, did, and was evidently deeply interested in what she heard; gradually, however, a look of horror overspread her face, and finally, pointing at me, she put her finger upon her lip—a gesture which apprised me, of course, that something was going forward which I was not to know, and which, equally of course, decided me upon discovering what that "something" was; so losing no time, I ran to my maid, Susette, who was arranging my room, and asked what had happened. At first she refused to tell me, increasing my curiosity a hundred-fold by adding that "the padrona had begged her to be silent." Eventually the French woman's love of gossip got the upper hand, and with many nods and winks and "hushes," she confided to me that the young prince was—dead!

"Dead!" I gasped.

"Yes, dead!" reiterated Susette. She then proceeded to say that the young man had been so ill during the journey that the doctor doubted his arriving alive, but the prince had such a longing to get to Florence that they hurried on. The doctor insisted upon travelling alone with his patient (great care and quiet being indispensable); but when they arrived within a few miles of Florence, the prince was taken so suddenly worse that the carriage was stopped and the doctor called in the priest, considering death imminent; the invalid lived, however, to be lifted into the hotel, but as he was being carried through the marble hall, the doctor called

out to the bearers to stop, and before the poor fellow could be placed upon a couch—he expired.

I was too awe-stricken to speak; but when my astonishment had in a measure subsided, I began to reason, and I said to Susette: "Who told you this?"

"The padrona," answered the maid.

"Did she see it happen?"

"No," said Susette, "for the princess begged the padrone and his wife to stay behind and superintend the unloading of the carriages, so that the prince's luggage might be brought up at once. The dame de compagnie told the padrona how it all occurred, and she told me."

"Well!" I exclaimed excitedly, "it is a very odd story, for I saw the young prince's face twice, and he looked exactly the same both times, very pale and quiet, but not dead."

"Hush! Lady Muriel," whispered Susette, "do not speak so loud, for the padrona, in the hurry and distress of the arrival, did not mention to the princess that you were in this room; she told the doctor——"

"And what did he say?" I asked quickly.

"He seemed put out, and said he feared the princess would be displeased, but when the padrona told him you were 'only a signorina,' he seemed satisfied."

"And you allowed me to stay all this time in a room to which I had no right," I exclaimed (my dignity being hurt also, at being considered a nonentity). "How could you do so? I shall go at once to mamma and——"

"Wait, Lady Muriel," interrupted Susette; "I will see the padrona, when she can attend to us; at present they are all in such trouble about the prince's death."

"I don't believe he is dead, for as he passed me, I am almost sure he opened his eyes and looked at me!"

"People's eyes are often half-open when they are dead," said Susette.

"Maybe," I argued; "but people don't open their eyes after they are dead."

"Ah! bah!" said Susette irritably, annoyed at her story being doubted, "the prince is dead now, at all events, for I stood by while you were lying down, and

I saw crosses, tapers, pictures and all kinds of things being carried into his room; and the doctor saw me and came up hastily to me, and said he had not yet told the princess that you slept in that room, and that I had better keep it quiet at present. Then he asked who you were? How old? Whether you slept alone? and then he asked me to do him a favor, for he could not, he said, leave the room for a moment himself, so would I fetch one of the footmen, Ivan by name, as he must tell him to go out and buy flowers for the death chamber? So I fetched him, and on my return the doctor put a gold piece in my hand and said, as he could not speak Italian, he might want my help again." I would not answer Susette, and I told her to leave me, for I was annoyed at getting mixed up with the Russians, angry, too, with the doctor for offering money to my maid, and still more angry with her for taking it; then—what could he mean, saying he might want Susette's help again? Surely there were Russians enough to do their own behests.

"There is something strange about it all," I soliloquized, "and I hate these Russians—I don't know why—and I will not remain amongst them; I will move into 'the box' at once." Having thus lashed myself into a state of high wrath, I burst out of my room into the passage and, to my unspeakable annoyance, I ran up against the priest, who, with the princess, was standing at my door. I murmured "Pardon!" and would have passed on, but the princess, looking amazed at my appearance, came forward and said civilly, "Ah! pretty Lady Muriel, I heard you were in the hotel; have you lost your way? the galleries are all so alike. Shall I conduct you back to your room? Where do you sleep?"

"Here, madame," I said rather defiantly, pointing to my room, determined to show that I had nothing to hide.

The lady looked surprised, but, quickly recovering herself, replied: "Ah! so near us! You are in the midst of much sorrow."

"The young prince," I said, awkwardly, "how is he?"

"Ah! you do not know; he is dead, alas!"

I had not time to reply, for the priest, who had been watching me intently, came forward and whispered in the princess' ear, upon which she said to me:

"Would you like to see my poor son—yourself?"

I hesitated—for I had never seen death—but I was curious, very curious, and the princess, seeing my hesitation, took me firmly by the hand, and, opening the door of her apartments, led me in.

For a moment I was perfectly amazed at what met my sight! The room was large, and in utter darkness, except immediately round the couch upon which the dead prince lay, and there innumerable candles of all sizes were blazing, like a fiery barrier defending him from the outer world. The doctor was standing close to the body, burning some condiment, which he held in a dish; he looked steadily at me, and gently drew down the white coverlet (which shrouded the whole figure) from off the head and upper portion of the body, so that I might see the sad but beautiful face, which was as white as the roses and camellias which surrounded it. The hair, eyebrows and eyelashes were very black, and the pale, slender fingers were lightly crossed over a crucifix which rested on the breast. I gazed tearfully at the pathetic young face, which seemed hardly, if at all, changed.

"How exquisite!" I sighed, "and how quickly everything has been arranged! May I go nearer?"

"Yes," answered the princess, "but not within the lights; but—how pale you are! You had better stay no longer."

"There is such a strange, sweet smell, which rather overcomes me."

"Ah! from the violets and Cape jessamine; we can none of us stay in the room; but you are so pale! You must come away." Then putting her handkerchief up to her eyes, she added: "He will be buried to-morrow; they bury so quickly here."

"Poor boy!" I ejaculated, and burst into tears.

Then, controlling myself with an effort, I courtesied ceremoniously to the princess and left her, and, after hastily dressing for a drive, I joined my mother and related to her all I had seen and heard. My mother was rather startled when she heard my account; but seeing I had sustained no nerve-shock, she only said:

"I hope, darling, the young man died of nothing infectious?"

"Oh, no, mamma; he has been ill for a long time; the princess told me so."

"I wish she had not spoken to you, Muriel; I begged the padrona to tell you nothing about it, for fear of alarming you. I hope the room you sleep in is not next the prince's, or you will be frightened."

"It takes a great deal to alarm me, mamma," I said, evasively and with a contemptuous laugh; so, after this conversation, I resolved to say nothing about my wish to move, for I was foolishly vain of my reputation for coolness and courage, and I felt sure, were I now to express a wish to change my room, it would be endangered; so, setting aside my dignity, I deemed it best to leave the distribution of the rooms as it was.

A short time afterward we started on a sight-seeing expedition, and after a cozy little dinner and a short rest on the balcony, we retired for the night. I was quickly undressed, and after Susette had left me, as I thought, for good, she returned, saying her room was so small, might she hang her bonnet and cloak, etc., in the recess within mine, which had been devoted to the carriage boxes? I was still too put out with her either to object or agree to anything she might propose; in fact, I felt that, as long as she left me personally in peace, she might hang herself up there on a peg till the morning, without any let or hindrance from me! So she did as she wished, and after replacing the portière over the recess, she once more left me, this time locking my door on the outside and carrying off the key, as my mother (rather against my will) had desired her to do, for fear I should forget to lock my door myself. Susette had also received orders to come to me once or

twice during the night, in case I should require anything. So I now settled myself in bed, and tried to sleep, but in vain, for either from over-fatigue, or excitement, or both, I was restless, uneasy, and tossed wearily from side to side. After a while, however, I gradually calmed down, becoming drowsy and confused; and all the sights and sounds I had passed through during the day revisited me, but in a misty, indistinct way, as though I saw and heard them through a veil.

These pictures, distinct at first, but gradually becoming more and more shadowy, were all in a moment rudely dispersed, dispelled, exactly like a mirror which had suddenly been cracked, struck by some unseen hand! I started violently, and sat up in bed, for I thought—nay, I was convinced—I heard one of the many doors in the room shake gently, but decidedly, as though some one were endeavoring to enter. I listened attentively, and for a while all seemed quiet; but—again! the same sound! and this time from another door, which, like the former one, opened into the Russian apartments. I watched, and distinctly saw the handle turn and the door shake! I was now thoroughly alarmed, and would have rushed in to Susette, but, in my distress, I remembered that my door was locked on the outside!

"Oh!" I gasped, "if Susette would only come! What can it be? What shall I do?" I waited, listening painfully, but for a few minutes (which seemed ages to me) I heard nothing more, and almost persuaded myself that it must have been my imagination, or perhaps, "Some one may have mistaken the door," I thought. I began to be ashamed of my cowardice; I determined to be brave, and ignore the whole thing—to lie down again—but I had hardly done so before I distinctly heard footsteps creeping along the balcony and stopping at my window—which was only lightly hooked together, for it was warm, and it had never struck me, till now, that as my room belonged to the Russian suite, so did the balcony, and was therefore not divided from theirs. Breathlessly I listened, and, tremblingly leaping out of

bed, I threw on my dressing-gown—stole to the window—and, gently pushing aside the blind, looked out—and never to my dying day shall I forget my horror when I became aware of a man's face, within an inch of my own, peering in at me!

Terror nearly paralyzed me, but did not prevent my recognizing in the coarse Kalmuck type of the intruder the face of one of the Russian men-servants!

I could not move or scream—but at a signal from the Russian, to my utter amaze and bewilderment, who should appear at his side but the "dead" prince! He was making imploring signs to me to be silent—not to be afraid, and, above all things, to let him in! The poor young face was so livid—the eyes so strained with terror; the tears, too, were coursing so visibly down the thin haggard cheeks, and the attitude was so touchingly humble and imploring, that my fright turned into pity, and I felt intuitively that in some mysterious way I held the life or death of this trembling creature in my hands. Impelled, therefore, by the power of mercy, and hurriedly eager to save I knew not whom, from I knew not what, I unhooked the window, and the Prince crept noiselessly in! To my unspeakable relief the footman fell back, evidently on the watch, and the poor boy sank at my feet, gasping out in a mixture of languages, "Oh, Lady Muriella, pour l'amour de Dieu, save me! Let me out at your door!"

"Good Heavens!" I cried, "it is locked on the outside!"

"Hide me, then, hide me!" he sobbed—as, in an agony of supplication, he clasped my gown. "Your white robe and your tête dorée make you look like an angiol di Dio! Be one to me, Muriella, an angiol protettore! Ecoutez, the good doctor and poor Ivan have risked much. The doctor made me feign death, and he has drugged the padre, and watches him, but he will soon wake! Ah! save me from him, from ma belle mère."

"I will do anything," I said excitedly; "but what can I do? You cannot stay here. What are you afraid of?"

"Ah! get me out of the hotel, for—" looking round in a terror-struck way, and whispering in my ear, "they are—poisoning me!"

"Rouse the house!" was my natural suggestion.

"No, no, lady! Ecoutez! I have no time to explain, but flight is my only chance—to the English Embassy—Lord Queensland will help me, and——" At this moment the key turned slowly in my door, and I just had time to push the prince into the recess (while he implored me in a whisper to confide in "no one—no one") when Susette appeared, sleepy, cross and with a light.

"I come, miladi, according to orders. Do you want anything?"

"Oh, Susette! I am so glad you are come. I really will not be locked in like this! it alarms me! for if anything were to happen I couldn't get out. I must have the key."

"Lady Muriel," (with sleepy dignity) "madame said I was to lock you in. But why" (with curiosity)—"why are you alarmed? Why are you up?"

"Because, I tell you, I don't like being locked in! If mamma knew how it frightens me, she would of course let it be as I say. What is that?" I added nervously; "I am sure I heard a step outside my door!"

"It is only the guardia, miladi; he walks about all night and watches the galleries."

"Did he see you?" I asked nervously.

"Yes; and he asked where I was going."

"Poor prince!" I mentally ejaculated, "there is little chance, then, of your getting out unseen." Then aloud I said to Susette, "Give me the key." Susette was too sleepy to argue further upon the matter, so she delivered up the key and I let her out and locked the door. I waited to hear her departing footsteps, then I flew to the recess and drew back the portière to liberate the prisoner; when, to my astonishment, the young man issued forth clad from head to foot in Susette's clothes! No one could possibly have recognized him, for he had tied a thick veil over his face, and the metamorphosis

was perfect. In spite of the awkward, nay, dangerous circumstances, I felt a strong inclination to laugh, but I said seriously: "Why do you not make a confidant of the guardia? Tell him your story and get him to let you out at the front door."

"No, no! the doctor told me solemnly to trust to no one but you—no servants, for the padre always bribes the servants. Ah, Muriella, que faire? How shall I get out?"

"I know," I said joyfully, and dashing into the recess I dragged forth a strong rope used to cord boxes. "You must get out by the balcony—it is not high; my brothers could almost let themselves drop without a rope, and I am sure I could."

"Ah! but I am ill, weak—faint."

"Well, well," I said rather impatiently, with a touch of British arrogance and contempt for foreign chicken-heartedness; "you stay in here while I make preparations." So I stepped out on the balcony. Ivan was standing a few yards off, watching the windows of the Russian apartments; and with a horrid shrinking I saw the moonbeams play upon a naked knife he held in his hand; and then for the first time I fully realized how dearly he had resolved to sell his young master's liberty, and what a dangerous matter I was engaged in!

The Russian comprehended at a glance what was my design, for as I was tying the rope to the balcony, I suppose my hand trembled; he came hurriedly forward and helped me, at the same time making signs that we had no time to lose. After fastening the rope firmly, he returned to his post of observation, and I softly called the young prince; then carefully looking into the road to see there were no inconvenient passers-by, I whispered to him in true schoolboy phraseology, "Now's your time!"

Taking the rope very gently from my hand, the young man seemed to pause—looking meanwhile wistfully at me; then raising the veil which concealed his features, before I could prevent it, he threw his arms passionately round me, straining me tightly to his

breast, and while murmuring the word "Muriella!" he pressed his trembling lips once, twice, and yet again, fervently, almost painfully to mine, and with a great sob threw himself over the ironwork, slid down and disappeared! The faithful Ivan now approached, and I was slightly nervous as to whether he might not deem it necessary to express his gratitude after the same fashion! but I need not have been alarmed, for after making an eager sign to me to lock my window, with a gesture of deep respect, he kissed the hem of my garment, slid down the rope and was gone, and I was left standing there alone, with a half inclination to slide down the rope and run away also! However, I listened to the sound of the fugitives' retreating footsteps, and as they died in the distance, I remembered Ivan's warning, and unknotting the rope, I re-entered my room with it in my hand, then shutting, locking, and even barricading my window, I sat down for a moment to collect my thoughts.

My eyes wandered round the room, and ere my bewilderment had quite subsided, I perceived that a bunch of forget-me-nots which I had placed in water by my bedside was gone! and blushingly I told myself that, while waiting, the young prince must have stolen it. With this discovery tears, all unbidden, rushed to my eyes (for I was, after all, a very young girl), and a tender feeling sprang up in my heart for the individual for whom I had undoubtedly gone through a great deal; and on my knees I thanked God for His help, and begged Him to raise up a stronger protector than myself to rid the prince of his enemies. This outburst of feeling (hysterical, no doubt) relieved me, and once more I became practical, and I decided that courageous as I might be (and had undoubtedly proved myself), I dared no longer stay alone in that room; for I feared the possibility (on the discovery of the prince's flight) of another visit from some of the Russians; so opening the door softly, I let myself out, and, with a creeping sensation, as though all the Russians in the hotel were pursuing me, I fled toward Susette's room, and to my

unspeakable relief met her coming toward me! She was petrified at the rencontre, and drawing me into her room, asked anxiously what was the matter? I told her breathlessly all that had happened, and she said she had been struck by my pale, frightened face when she had seen me an hour before; and it had so haunted her, that she was now on her way to my room. She looked rather rueful when she heard of the loss of her clothes, but her womanly sympathy went out heartily to the poor boy when I described his terror and distress, and she forthwith began to consider how best to conceal his flight. I did not then understand that this was more for my sake than for that of the fugitive.

Susette returned at once with me to my bedroom, for the watchman, she said, had luckily seen her as she entered it an hour before, and he would think she had remained there all night, so we locked the door and lay down together. Not long after we had done so, we again heard footsteps on the balcony, and as the moon was shining brightly, we saw the shadow of a man pass quickly across the blind, and as it returned it lingered long enough at my window for me to recognize the spare form of the priest! but finding, I suppose, that everything was unsuspiciously quiet, and the window closed, the figure vanished as cautiously as it had appeared; and, although we listened long and attentively, we heard nothing more. After a while my nervousness calmed down, and Susette's propinquity giving me a sense of security, I fell asleep. The sun was shining brightly into the room as I awoke, and I overheard the fille de chambre tell Susette that the Russians had all left the hotel quite two hours before!

As soon as I was dressed, I hurried to my mother and related the whole adventure. She was much excited, and proposed going at once to the Bristish Embassy (to relate the story), which we did, and were admitted directly into Lord Queensland's presence. I was terribly disappointed when the great man assured us nothing whatever had been heard of the fugitives, and equally indignant when I discovered that both he and his at-

taché discredited my story! The ambassador was barely civil, and "thought" I had been "hoaxed," that my "imagination" had "exaggerated the facts," etc. He asked whether any person beside myself had witnessed "the alleged flight," and I fancied he seemed relieved when I replied in the negative; and my suspicions of his sincerity were still more aroused by his evident anxiety that we should keep the story to ourselves, impressing upon my mother (who turned very pale) that we had better do so "for her pretty young daughter's sake." Being young and inexperienced, I missed the innuendo, but as the minister had early let out that he was "personally acquainted" with the Princess Lipetska, that she was "nearly related to the Imperial Family," and that such an "unlikely story" as mine might give great offence, I shrewdly suspected his motive for secrecy.

In a few minutes Lord Queensland rose, thus, as he thought, ending the discussion; but feeling that my veracity was unfairly impugned, I was not to be so summarily dismissed; besides the ambassador's parting words did not tend to soothe my irritation. "I advise you, madam," he said to my mother, "not to allow pretty Lady Muriel to sleep alone in a hotel again. Keep her to her dolls, dear lady; there are really no children nowadays."

This was unbearable, so losing all self-control I said angrily, "It is a pity, my lord, that some old men should be chosen to fill high positions who are little better than 'dolls' themselves, especially when called upon to act in an emergency! And oh!" I cried, bursting into childish tears, "they are not so nice as dolls, for although their heads may be equally empty, dolls have hair, whereas, old men very often have not!" Need I say Lord Queensland was bald?

My mother was horrified at my words, but the ambassador seemed tickled, and patting me on the shoulder, called me "a gold-headed little spitfire." I was not, however, to be mollified, and as I marched from the room, I said maliciously, "If you, my lord, will not take the story up, I shall spread it abroad, as an instance

of the incompetency of our officials to defend the friendless!" To my surprise, I perceived that my words "at random sent, had found a mark they never meant"; for Lord Queensland, motioning to his attaché to close the door, said to my mother: "May I ask you a favor? I frankly (!) confess I know something of the story and I wish, for certain reasons, to keep it quiet. So will you —will your daughter—for the young prince's sake—keep the secret until you hear from me?" My mother was shocked at the ambassador's want of candor, and so alarmed at the superabundance of that quality in me, that she would have promised anything to get away; but I said coldly, "It is a pity you should not have placed confidence in us from the first; but if" (with great dignity, I said it) "you can assure me, on the honor of an Englishman" ("not of a diplomat," I said cuttingly), "that silence will serve the poor boy, I am ready to pass my word also."

"Any other course of action will injure him, Lady Muriel."

"So be it," I said loftily, delighted to feel that a signorina had proved herself no nonentity after all!

We took leave of the minister and his scared attaché and returned to the hotel, and it is needless to say we never heard again from His Excellency; but in ten days' time the papers informed us that his lordship had quitted Florence for some months.

The whole story seemed to have passed away like an uneasy dream. The Russians had vanished, and their rooms were now occupied by a commonplace, middle-class English family, whom I heard conversing about the "Pitty Pally" (meaning, I presumed, the Pitti Palais), and the padrone and his wife avoided mentioning the princess or any of her suite; indeed, the subject seemed so distasteful to them that we forbore alluding to it, and after a short uneventful period had elapsed, we directed our footsteps homeward to London.

One morning my mother put "The Morning Post" into my hands, eagerly desiring me to read a paragraph aloud. It was a quotation from a St. Petersburg jour-

nal, and it ran thus: "Great excitement has been caused lately in St. Petersburg in consequence of a mysterious event which has taken place in the family of the Prince Lipetska. His highness lost his first wife sixteen years ago, at the birth of the Prince Michael, who, although a delicate child, survived his mother, and was the object of his father's tenderest affections. Four years ago the Prince Lipetska married again, choosing the Princess Myrza de Zeschaw, a lady of great beauty.

"The Princess Myrza bore two sons, and was a devoted mother, not only to her own offspring, but also to her step-son, who was much attached to her, and whose recent uncertain health seemed the only cloud in the princely pair's domestic horizon.

"A few months ago the young prince became so seriously ill that the best medical advice was sought, when change of air and a warm climate were suggested. The Prince Lipetska being unable just then to lay aside his court duties (he was one of the Czar's highest functionaries), the princess offered to leave her own young family, and proceed with her step-son to Italy, purposing (at the prince's wish) to visit a famous but very old doctor resident at Pisa, who had known the young Michael from his birth.

"Accordingly the princess started, accompanied by a priest, a dame de compagnie and a large suite; and they had not been long absent before it was remarked that the Prince Lipetska became greatly depressed, and that he was constantly closeted with a certain Doctor d'Obreskoff, who had attended the family for years, but who, in consequence of increasing age, and a strong dislike conceived against him by the princess, had given up his position as family physician. The accounts from Italy getting worse, the anxious father would have started at once to join his son, but (to the surprise of all parties) he yielded to Doctor d'Obreskoff's entreaties, and, instead of going himself, dispatched a young English doctor, who received instructions to travel with the utmost speed.

"Dr. Granville's arrival at Pisa (bringing his creden-

tials from the prince) took the princess entirely by surprise, and he installed himself without delay as medical companion to the sick boy, who took to him with a complete infatuation, refusing to eat, drink or sleep save in his presence. One day, to the amazement of the St. Petersburg world, the young Michael arrived at his father's house, restored to health, and accompanied by a single servant! His father received him tearfully, but without surprise, and a few days later the whole family left St. Petersburg for an indefinite period. Nothing has been heard of the princess, and mystery shrouds the whole affair."

"There, mamma," I said, "you see I could tell them more than they know."

"What an awful thing!" said my mother gravely. "I wonder what has become of that wretched woman, and whether we shall hear any more about it."

This question was answered a short time afterward; for on the anniversary of the memorable night of the 17th September, I was sitting at my window, thinking over it all, when my mother called me, and to my surprise I discovered a travel-stained stranger in the room with her, and upon his turning toward me I exclaimed, "The young prince's English doctor!" He carried a parcel, seemed overjoyed at seeing me, and grasped my hand, calling me the angiol protettore and a host of pretty things. I exclaimed: "How is the poor boy? Do—do tell me everything from the very beginning."

The young man smiled, and said, "I have little to tell, or rather little that I may tell; and ere I begin may I beg of you both to keep all you know sacred? For although to some degree the story has become public, the whole truth is not known, and for the prince's sake I beg this favor of you."

We, of course, gave the required promise, and Dr. Granville proceeded with much feeling to tell us everything.

"The poor boy," he said, "nearly fell a victim to the jealousy of the princess for her own children. She was administering small doses of poison to him, which were

slowly but surely taking effect. I arrived just in time to save his life. The old Dr. d'Obreskoff had been haunted for some time by a horrid suspicion of foul play, and after the princess's hurried departure to Italy he determined to search her apartments privately, and he discovered such tangible proofs of her guilt—proofs, however, which a knowledge of medicine alone could recognize—that he broke the awful truth to the prince, who could scarcely be restrained from starting at once to Italy to save his son. The doctor, however, advised differently, for his medical mind gathered from the most recent accounts that nothing imminent was to be feared, and he knew that unless everything was arranged most diplomatically, the prince would have to contend against troubles and even dangers at court, in consequence of the princess's high relationships. Luckily, I was paying a visit to St. Petersburg at the time, and the old doctor knew all about me; how I had been brought up in the medical profession, but that, developing a strong taste for adventure, I had been engaged in detective cases, and that thus I claimed an intimate personal acquaintance with the two most active agents in this case—medicine and murder. The prince sent me to Italy with full powers, only impressing upon me the absolute necessity of saving the princess's reputation; and directly I arrived I warned Prince Michael of his own danger, of his father's commands concerning the princess, that he was to eat, drink and sleep in my presence only, and to leave the rest to me. He was very ill when I arrived, but I soon inspired him with confidence, and during the dreadful journey to Florence I taught him to feign death. We had a rehearsal before arriving, and I found that, like most Russians, his powers of acting were 'first-class.' I knew if I could only reach Florence I should be safe, as I was acquainted with Lord Queensland and had warned him of my coming; but the journey was perilous, as I could not tell whether the princess had discovered who and what I was; besides, I feared the priest, and how much he guessed of the truth. However, thank God, all went

well. All would have been easy could I have taken the padrone into my confidence, but the prince had solemnly bound me to trust no one—no servants, except Ivan, and I kept my word. In England every one would have helped me, but with Russians and Italians there are wheels within wheels. One of my greatest difficulties was to keep the princess and the priest out of the 'death chamber,' for I feared the prince betraying himself. So I burnt a concoction, ostensibly for sanitary purposes, which had the effect of causing those unused to it to feel faint (as you did, Lady Muriel, and as he did, poor boy, at times, but we had to risk that").

"But," interrupted I, "after he and Ivan escaped, where did they go? He told me they should go to the English Embassy, but they did not do so."

"Forgive me, but they did, and were in the house when your mother and you called. Lord Queensland knew they were coming, and an hour had not elapsed after their flight before a man came and whistled 'God Save the Queen' beneath the balcony (a preconcerted sign), whereby I knew the fugitives were safe under the British flag. The Ambassador, knowing about the princess's birth, acted with great caution."

"Eminently so," I said dryly, "and how about the princess?"

"Ah, there I am tongue-tied. Suffice it to say that after the prince's disappearance my personal dangers began, for I never lost sight of her, poor soul, till—— Ah, well, Russian laws and English laws are different, and grateful I am to have returned from so ugly a business."

Dr. Granville now rose to depart, and turning kindly to me, he said: "Lady Muriel, I parted from Prince Michael not many hours ago, and he said I was not to rest till I had seen you, and had reminded you that this is the anniversary of his flight, and that all through life the 18th of September will be a night sacred to the thought of you."

As the doctor said these words a curious sort of feeling came over me. His voice sounded strange, far off,

and I seemed to see the gloomy bed-chamber, the moonlit window, the boy in agonized supplication at my feet, the——

The doctor went on: "He sends an offering of humble gratitude; his words were, 'Put it into her own dear hands, but tell her to open it alone; tell her as she opens it, my voice will greet her, and tell her, oh, tell her, we must meet again.' "

Without a word I took the parcel. I knew the doctor raised my hand and kissed it, and that, bowing to my mother, he left the room. I went slowly, dreamily, upstairs, hearing as I did so the front door open and shut and the prince's messenger pass out and away! Sitting by my bed, I passively recalled the words, "We must meet again," and eagerly tearing off the paper covering of the parcel, I discovered a velvet casket, upon which "Muriella" was stamped in letters of gold. I took the pretty gold key and opened the casket, and I beheld a necklace of eighteen pearls (a pearl, I understood, for each day), and attached to it was a heart, pierced through by a diamond arrow. At the back of the arrow these words were engraved:

"Firenze,
Il 18 Settembre, 184–,
Gratitudine, Fede, Amore."

The heart opened, and within it I found—a shred of twisted rope—and a few withered forget-me-nots. I shed a few tears, I knew not why, and ran down and showed it to my mother.

Many dwellers in cities will wish that their neighbors would learn to play the clarionet in the same way as the "artist" in this little story by Jules Moinaux. It is translated for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter.

A CLARIONET MELODY.

THE law against beggary had made it necessary to arrest little Févrolles.

It would not increase his punishment to charge him with lying also, for in fact the vagabond lied in pretending that he knew how to play the clarionet, and lying surely ought to be punishable. The counsel, Mr. Prudhomme, had even advanced the opinion that practice on that instrument makes the player blind.

However, as the question has not received full scientific investigation, it is well to accept the common belief—that it is when one is already blind that he plays the clarionet.

The Counsel: "You confess that you have begged?"

Févrolles: "I am very much mortified that you should call me a beggar."

The Counsel: "You have been seen receiving money from persons sitting before cafés on the street."

Févrolles: "If all the people who receive money were beggars, then all the world would be beggars. What is it to beg? Is it to say, 'Charity, if you please? Have pity upon a poor unhappy creature.' I have said nothing of this sort."

Counsel: "That may be, but you have been seen having your hand extended as if for alms."

Févrolles: "If every one who extends his hand were to be stopped, every one would be stopped who extended his hand to see if it rained, or who made a gesture to shake hands with a friend or neighbor."

Counsel: "You had better keep quiet, instead of citing such pretended parallel cases as these"; (then turning

to a guardian of the peace, present at the bar as a witness), "Raise your right hand."

Counsel: "See, the witness has his hand raised, but it is in a very different position from that of a beggar."

The witness, having been sworn, declared that he had followed the accused, and had seen him stop at the doors of cafés and receive money.

Counsel: "As a musical artist, you say. Have you a license?"

Février lles: "No; but I should be judged as a musician without a license, and not as a beggar."

Witness: "He is not even a musician. He has a clarionet, it is true, but this is what he does. He approaches a group of lunchers, and acts as though he were going to play. When they see this, the group cry, 'No, no! go away!' and when he seems bound to persist, then, in order to rid themselves of him, they give him two or three sous and he goes away. He does this all the morning, and so succeeds in pocketing considerable coin. Finally, at one table a party prepared themselves to listen, but when he was seen to keep the clarionet to his mouth without making any sound, one sang out: 'Why don't you play?' He then confessed that he did not know how to play." (Laughter.)

Counsel: "Thus you see you force people to give you alms to ward off your clarionet, which you do not even know how to play."

Février lles: "I have not yet had time to learn, having bought it one evening not long ago at a pawnshop. I am a musician all the same, only my instrument is the accordion."

The tribunal condemned this singular artist to two months in prison.

The world would be a sordid place if all romance were turned into bread-and-butter reality, and if our story-writers were pinned down to cold, exact, photographic facts. That is what Rosa Mulholland must have thought when she penned for *Time* this wild and pathetic idyl of Ireland.

MACHA.

THERE is a lone upper world among the Connemara Hills seldom visited by any wayfarer from the ordinary paths of life. Mountains form bulwarks around it; the gates into it are narrow defiles between rugged crags; the centres of its silent valleys are deep lakes, cold and gray as steel, or black with the shadow of the rain-clouds. By the water's margin the dark, sullen earth, with its gorgeous clothing of purple and embroideries of emerald green, upheaves in curious knolls and bosses, or stretches away in wind-swept levels. The peaks around take fantastic shapes, and in twilight the place is like some region of Hades, where disembodied souls walk in shadow and muse upon the mysteries that death has unfolded to them.

Uncongenial as it appears to human life, there are a few inhabitants of this world of silent gloom and barren beauty. Here and there the infrequent traveller will come upon an isolated cabin built of rude stone and roofed with the sod, hardly distinguishable from the heather-capped rock except for the curl of smoke that steals through a hole from the hearthstone within. On a summer morning an inquisitive explorer of this lonesome world passed by one of these smoking hovels, and while gazing on it in dismay, almost expecting to see a gnome or monster issue from it, was startled by the appearance of an exquisite face which shone on him for a moment and vanished. The solitary rambler in so eerie a spot was at the moment in an imaginative mood, and open to all influences of the beautiful and supernatural, and almost believed that a sprite of the moun-

tain had crossed his path, and that she had a fateful message for him in her eyes; but shaking himself into a more rational frame of mind he went on his way, with only a lingering look at the cabin, which seemed to retreat into the fastnesses of the rock. Yet, in spite of common sense, the wild beautiful eyes of the mountain girl pursued him, the message that lay a mystery in their depths bewitched him, and finally, as the sun shot forth long shafts of flame and lances of gold, setting fierily behind a cluster of blackening mountain-peaks, he turned upon his heel, and retraced his steps in the direction of the enchanted hovel.

Macha, the owner of the beautiful face, had withdrawn it hastily into the interior of the cabin, scared at the unwonted sight of a stranger, as lowland dwellers might be scared by a ghost. The cabin was so poor that, only for the red hearth and the warm smell of smoke, it might have been mistaken for a shed for cattle. The earthen floor was uneven and full of holes; the roof, of heather and sticks, was blackened with smoke; the hearthstone was broken. One crazy table, one chair, and two or three other nondescript seats; a kettle, a pot, a battered tin can, and a few mugs and plates—these were the chief contents of the dwelling's principal room. Looking around, one might well ask by what means life could be supported in this place. Patches of potatoes that struggled for existence between bog and rock close by, and a black cutting, that showed like an ugly wound on the face of a distant level, and was the turf-mine—these gave the only answer to such inquiry. An old woman sat spinning in the corner of the cabin, lean and smoke-dried, like a mummy, her dark-red garment, and the yellow handkerchief wound turban-wise round her head, making a spot of subdued color in the murky picture. The contents of a pot of potatoes had been turned out on the table; and Macha, who with a peculiar cry had summoned the family from their work at the bog to dinner, stood in the middle of the floor, with a slant light falling on her from the sky, across the mountain-peaks, through the smoke-stained

doorway. Her skirt of crimson wool, spun by the grandame in the corner, and dyed with madder by Macha herself, was short enough to show her white feet, shining on the earthen floor. Over it she wore a short brown bodice, and a few yards of coarse yellow-white calico were wound about her shoulders, and had been about her head, but the drapery had fallen back in a sort of cowl behind her neck. No white lily or golden rose was ever so beautiful as the face of Macha, crowned with its honey-colored hair, set with eyes dark and blue, with a look half sweet, half troubled; a rose-red mouth, tinted to match flowers the girl had never seen, and creamy, satin-smooth, dimpled cheeks. The way in which her head was set on her shoulders, the pose of her figure, and the movements of her white bare arms recalled the goddesses in marble of the early Greeks. With her almost superhuman beauty, where had Macha come from—to battle with the elements for life, to grow sun-tanned, weather-beaten, lean and withered in the struggle to force the potato out of the rock and peat out of the reeking bog? What was she doing in this dreary upper world of the barren Irish hills; how could she be the granddaughter of the unlovely crone in the corner; and why had generations of ignorance and hunger and rude toil produced her? It must be that Nature had created her for a whim, making her a sort of image of the wild beauty of this picturesque wilderness.

The after-glow of the sunset was abroad when Macha went out again, to roam round the lake in a fashion of her own. A strange amber-and-red reflection illuminated one side of the sky and the mountain-peaks, intensified by gloomy fringes trailing along the horizon. Delicate green tints overspread the other; and in this fairer skyey field had blossomed the round white moon, brightening momentarily, and shining among the early stars like a lily among daisies. Earth and heaven were pictured in the lake—the gemmed meadows and luridly illuminated deserts on high, the blackening hills, and the moving shapes of orange, brown and purple that caught and rent the fringes of the approaching night.

Macha clasped her hands over her head, and gazed round her half fearfully, enjoying and understanding the beauty of it all. She had heard of a shining city beyond the gold and silver gates of the sun and the moon; also of earthly cities, wonderful too, but not so beautiful, that lay down below the mountains in the busy world of men. She meant to go to the one, but she did not care to visit the others. Her mountain home, with its inhabitants, contained the desires of her heart. The old brown crucifix on the cabin-wall was her passport to the final happy destination of all patient souls, whither she and all she loved would depart when the Master should send them a message to come. Nothing natural or supernatural dismayed or disgusted her. If there were spirits in the rocks and fairies in the lake, the Almighty knew what they were doing there, and everything was all for the best.

"Macha, come in," called her mother from the cabin. "Something will get you."

"Ay, mother, I am coming," said Macha; but still she lingered, looking hard at a piece of rock that seemed to be taking the shape of "something." The clouds are alive, and move, and change—why should not the rocks? Suddenly a living person seemed to emerge out of the rock, and come beside her; and, startled, she would have fallen into the lake had not a strong arm seized her and swung her into safety.

"Holy Mother! I nearly drowned you!" cried Macha, looking at the same traveller who had passed the cabin in the morning.

"I nearly drowned you," said the stranger, gazing in wonder at her beauty, which seemed to have become almost unearthly, as the still warm glow from one side irradiated her hair, and the greenish moonlight from the other whitened her round cheek and the drapery of her shoulder.

"I thought you were—him who lives down in the lake," whispered Macha.

"Who is he?"

She looked all round in the air, and her lovely face

caught a thousand reflections of flitting colors and lights. Then she signed with her hand toward the lake.

"The water is deep," she said, "and there is many a thing down there. But you are a living man, for I saw you in the morning."

The person addressed felt a strange thrill as she spoke and put out her round gleaming arm and touched his hand with her warm fingers, as if to assure herself that her own words were true, and that he was indeed a living man.

"And you are a living woman," he said. "I almost thought you were a spirit moving along the edge of the lake. Why do you keep so close to the edge? I thought I saw you walking on the water."

"I like to look in and see what I can see," said the girl mysteriously.

"Do you always walk here in the evenings?"

"Yes, and sometimes a bit at dawn. Mother says something wicked will meet me. But I have only met you, and you are not wicked."

"I am not as good as I ought to be," said the man tremulously, answering the look of simple faith and approval in the girl's wonderful eyes. "But I hope I am not altogether wicked;" and the strangeness of his own humility escaped his notice.

"I do not much believe in wickedness myself," said Macha, "except, of course, in the great dhiaoul" (devil), crossing herself. "But he will never hurt me, unless I do something wrong."

"What do you see when you walk here in the dawn?"

"I see the blessed spirits trooping up and down the skies. Anybody could see them. Sometimes they come down upon the hills; but they change into white clouds and run away when they come too near me. There is my mother calling me, and the supper is ready."

"By what name is she calling you?"

"Macha is my name. If you will eat a few potatoes I will bring them out to you."

"I am not hungry, Macha, and I am going back to

the inn. But if you offer me some another day I will take them."

The girl went in to her mother, and the stranger returned through the brightening moonlight down the rugged mountain, retracing the steps he had made in the morning. The inn lay under the hills, a few miles below the wild region where Macha had been born, in which she had grown to womanhood, eating the potatoes she had helped to produce, and watching the blessed spirits trooping up and down the skies.

"Something will get you," said Macha's mother for the hundredth time, as the girl appeared for her supper; and she was not wrong, for Fate had got hold of Macha.

Strange and unaccountable are the whims of men. Here was one with wealth and rank, accustomed to all that is cultivated, witty, and beautiful among women, and yet, having gone fancy-free till rather a late period of bachelorhood, he had climbed a savage mountain in an isolated corner of what he considered an uncivilized country, to fall in love with a wild girl with a wild name, who lived upon potatoes in a hovel under a rock! And he did not feel ashamed of himself. Contrasts and inconsistencies had always possessed a fascination for him. Did not the spotless white flower of the bog flourish there as purely as though it had not sprung out of the black slimy substance that held its root? And Macha, with her shining bare feet and arms, and her face like a poet's dream, was all the more enchanting to his imagination because she had sprung, with her spontaneous loveliness, out of the mountain, and had been nourished and perfected between the wind and the sun, without help from "civilization" or a lesson from "art."

He was going back to the inn that he might have further opportunities of seeing this girl, and yet he told himself that his admiration for her was merely an abstract idea; that, after he had seen her a few times and studied her exceptional beauty and character he would go on his way contented, rejoicing to have perceived that nature can be still so lovely and unspoiled in her own secret fastnesses, beyond the ken of the

world. His rest was broken that night by a new excitement; and he wakened in the dawn to fancy he saw Macha walking, with her bare white feet, in the rosy light round the margin of the lake. He wanted to hear her voice again, and feel the touch of her hand. It struck him as remarkable that she had shown no shyness of him, speaking to him as naturally as if he had been her brother; and he divined that this was so because she knew nothing of ranks and classes. Only the supernatural had power to awe her, and she had felt safe and happy as soon as she had assured herself that he was a living man. Accustomed to the attentions of women, he would have felt less attraction toward Macha had she shown any desire for his return. The absence of all coquetry in her delighted him.

The girl thought of him, lying on her straw bed in the dead of the night. There was a hole in the roof above her head, a hole that would be thatched over with heather for the winter, but at present it was good to let in the air of heaven. Through it Macha could see a star shining in the sky, like a little island of splendor in an ocean of dark blue, and the rugged twigs of the broken heather made a rough frame for the bit of glory. The beauty of Macha's face lay quenched in darkness beneath, but her soul escaped through the opening up to the kindred mystery of the star, carrying with it the memory of the event of the evening. Her mind rested with placid wonder on the occurrence of her meeting with the stranger. She had not fallen in love with him, as he with her, nor did she dream of such a thing. Round about her lay her mother, her grandmother, her little sisters, sleeping soundly, with the love of Macha asleep in their hearts. She loved them passionately, and had no thought or hope for herself apart from them. To work with them, hand and foot, that they might all have enough potatoes and turf to enable them to live together, without more pain than they could endure, this was the one object of her existence. Vague splendors and delicious rest and joy were, she knew, awaiting them all beyond the gates of the

sun. The only thing to be desired was that they might not be parted meanwhile in their purgatory on the lonely mountain. As the night crept on, and the stars waxed brighter, Macha owned to herself that the "living man" might have been "him who lives down in the lake" after all. Pondering this doubt, she fell asleep.

The stranger reappeared next day, and for many days afterward haunted the mountain. Macha had leave from her mother to accompany him in his search for the wild-flowers which, he explained to them, he wanted for scientific purposes. The little sisters frisked about them and took their share in the search, dancing like young kids on the edge of precipices, with wild bright eyes and flying locks. Potatoes boiled in the cabin were eaten on the heather, and the long summer days went past like the beads on a golden rosary, told brightly through the fingers. The man was brotherly and kind with the little girls and the elder women, but he recognized a gulf between them and Macha. Their speech, translated literally from the Irish, though poetical and musical enough, was not delicately correct, as his ear imagined hers to be; their swift feet were not white, nor was their clothing spotless. Macha, who bathed in the lake every morning, and hung out her yellow hair to dry in the first beams of the sun, and who wore her well-bleached draperies like a princess, could not keep young nor old from dyeing their skins and garments in the bog-holes. An instinctive personal delicacy had come to Macha with her exceptional beauty. At the end of a fortnight the stranger told himself that this mountain flower was worthy of being transplanted into the brightest *parterre* ever cherished by man. And what a month ago would have appeared to him only madness seemed now most sensible.

Macha came into the cabin one evening in the gloaming, with a face of dismay.

"Mother!" she said, grasping her mother's arm.

"What is on you, child?"

"The sassenach is asking me to go away with him."

"Away with him?"

"He wants to give me a satin gown and a ring, and to take me to his home."

"Well, avourneen," with a long sigh, "if he makes you a true wife and is good to you, you would be better with him than here."

"Mother," cried the girl passionately, "have I vexed you, have I angered you, that you would turn me from your door?"

"Turn you away, asthore machree! Macha, are you mad? Wouldn't it be only to see you happy and well? I suppose the man has a good farm and can pay his rent. And you would be well warmed and fed, my Macha, though your mother's hearth would be blank."

"I don't want to be well warmed and fed; I am as well-off as you and the grandmother and the girlshes. He would take me out to England, over the sea—away, away to the other side of the world!"

And the girl sobbed wildly on her mother's shoulder.

"Send him off, then, acushla machree. Why need you break your heart about what nobody is going to bid you do? Your mother before you never wore a fine gown; and we will be hungry together as we always were."

Macha's weeping subsided a little; but only to break out again as fiercely as before.

"I cannot send him away, mother! I love him, as well as you. Oh, why did he ever come over the mountain? Better it had been him that lives down in the lake!"

The mother stood aghast. "Holy Virgin!" she cried; "and 'tis only a score of days since we saw him first. Then, if you love him like that, my daughter, you are bound to be his wife. You must go—even to England over the sea!"

"You don't know what you are saying, mother. How could I live without seeing your face?"

"As many have to live, my Macha. Maybe he would bring you back to see us. And you might be able to send us the potato-seed, or a piece of the good flannel to keep us warm."

Macha looked piteously in her mother's eyes, and then round the familiar cabin; the storm came down again upon her heart, and she flung up her arms and fell into a swoon. Her lover, arriving up the mountain, found her lying white on the heather outside the door, with her head on her mother's knees, and was thus led into uttering promises which, else, he might never have made.

"It's only the heart that is too strong in her," said the poor mother sorrowfully. "It is ill to love a stranger that must part you from your own."

"I swear to bring her back," said the man eagerly. "She shall come whenever she pleases, and bring as many good things as she likes. We might even build a house in the valley below."

At this the color began to return into Macha's cheeks; and the comfortable promises sank deep into her mind.

Little by little the struggle between the new love and the old was softened away; the will of the stranger prevailed, and the marriage took place in a little rude mountain chapel, where Macha had been baptized, and where, travelling through hail, rain and storm, she had knelt every Sunday since she had been able to walk. At the church doors the husband reiterated the promise that he would bring her back; very soon she would return to the mountain. He almost tore his bride away, weeping and half fainting, from the embraces of her people, from the clinging of their thin brown hands, and the kisses of their weather-beaten faces. And in spite of the promises he had just repeated, he was glad to think that he had probably seen the last of this wild mountain tribe.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert dressed his wife in a lady's garb, and surrounded her with all the appointments that were suited to her new station. The first jar to his happiness was given by his perception that, beautiful as was Macha in her silks and laces and trinkets, musical as was her speech, graceful as were her movements, there was yet something wanting in her to make her a

bride that could be presented, without risk of criticism, to his friends. The enchanting mountain girl, with her picturesque beauty and wild charming ways, was no more. The lovely Lady Gilbert was a little too unconventional, with her soft brogue, her vivid and figurative language, her quick natural gestures, her little slips in grammar, and artless habitual utterance of the truth. But Sir Humphrey was very patient with her, and set to work to polish his precious gem in the rough.

A long time passed over, and the husband felt no desire to revisit the highlands of Connaught.

"Dear," said his wife to him one day, "when are we going back to see my mother?"

She was standing before him in a flowing robe of soft white stuff, with her honey-colored hair dressed by a French maid, with jewels in her ears, and flowers at her breast, looking such a picture of beauty and refinement that even the peculiar intonation that still clung to her speech could not declare her other than a lady. Macha possessed in a high degree the power of adapting herself to the ways of those around her. Her husband recognized this power in her, and relied upon it to carry him through the consequences of his own rash and extraordinary conduct. He was grateful to his wife for the persistent efforts he saw her make, knowing she was influenced solely by love for him, for she took but little interest in the pleasures that surrounded her. He did not know how far she was influenced by another motive also, the desire to earn a reward, in the fulfilment of his promise to bring her back to her native hills.

So long ago did it seem, that folly that had married him to a peasant-wife, that all recollection of the details of the circumstances had almost passed away from his mind. He was a man of quick, over-powering impulses, and memories that faded with ease. Things that were full of pathetic interest to him yesterday were very likely to be follies to him to-day. Yet he was faithful in his affection for Macha; and the sight of her struggling with her difficulties, laboring to make

herself all that he could wish, and succeeding by the inspiration of something like genius, touched and delighted the best feelings of his nature. He was the more disposed to be satisfied with the results of his marriage because his wife's low extraction was a secret from his associates. It was believed that she was the daughter of a noble but impoverished Irish family—that she had been neglected in her early years, and educated by her husband. A pretty romance had been constructed, how or by whom Sir Humphrey did not know. His wife's gentle grace was the real foundation for it; and at all events he had not the courage to contradict the tale.

With all this good luck there was something wanting to their happiness. Macha did not fall into raptures with the splendors of her home, nor with the amusements of society, nor with the flatteries and triumphs that fell to her share. She only half lived in luxury by her husband's side; the other half of her lived on the mountain among the privations to which she was born. Under her rich sables she shuddered at the cold on her mother's limbs: and by her own glowing fireside she kept counting the sods of turf that might have been saved from the rainy season to keep warmth in the aged grandmother's withered frame. She heard the little sisters saying, "What is Macha doing? Macha is so happy, she has forgotten us!" The heart within her was getting every day more chill, because as yet her husband's promise did not seem likely to be fulfilled. At last she had summoned courage, and asked him the question, "When will you let me see my mother?"

Sir Humphrey was troubled. He was quite resolved never to let Macha return to her people, and he had hoped that the desire to go to them would have faded away from her before now. There was something in her face which he could not understand, but which made him feel that he must deal very gently with her.

"It is out of the question at present, love," he said; "but you shall send her any present you please."

She shut her eager lips, seeing that her husband would not bear to be urged. He went hurriedly out of the room, and Macha stood silently by the fire, with a strange gray cloud overshadowing her face. The third summer had gone by, and now again the winter was passing, and she seemed further than ever from attaining the great desire of her heart. A minute she stood where he had left her, with closed eyes, climbing in spirit the rough ascent to the mountain cabin. In imagination she threw herself at her mother's feet, begged her forgiveness, assured her of her love, pleaded her inability to keep her word. Then with a long sigh she unclosed her eyes, unbent her brows, and patiently went about her occupations. She took advantage of her husband's permission to send a present—a cloak for the grandmother, and flannel for the mother and the little sisters. There was much trouble about addressing the parcel so that it might reach that distant and isolated cabin; but the trouble was taken, and that the parcel went safely home was known by the arrival of an acknowledgment of the gift—a grotesque scrawl in pen and ink, scarcely legible, but expressive of love and gratitude. Sir Humphrey read the curious document with a curling lip, and threw it in the fire. Allow his wife to go back among these savages! No; it was not likely he could be so foolish. One such folly in a lifetime was surely enough. They must learn to forget Macha, and Macha must learn to forget them.

How was she to be taught to do it, though? Why was she so stupidly, so obstinately blind to the exigencies of the case? Full of intelligence on every other subject, she could not be brought to see that between Sir Humphrey's wife and the wild tribe of her people there could not and must not be any further personal intercourse. How slow she was in taking up his meaning, when he tried to bear it in upon her, without putting the fact before her in uncomfortable words! With her beautiful serious face, her outward and inward refinement, in her soft white draperies and delicate laces, how could she contemplate a visit to that abode of

poverty which he remembered only too well? Fancy the wild, brown little sisters hugging the elegant Lady Gilbert; the meager, weather-beaten mother weeping over her, the mummy-like grandmother mumbling Irish into her ears! There was a grotesqueness in the picture, as presented to Sir Humphrey's imagination, that brought the indignant color to his face.

Macha's obtuseness was aggravating. From time to time she would say to him imploringly, "When will you allow me to go?" and when answered unsatisfactorily, would turn away with that dull look of patience that was becoming habitual to her countenance. She lived in a state of painful suspense, of silent expectation, which showed she had not taken in the idea that he was resolved never to grant her request. The memory of his promise was still so fresh in her thoughts. Her stupidity was the blindness of perfect faith.

Every day her yearning grew deeper, and the look of it settled in her eyes. Her husband resolutely appeared to misunderstand her, refused to meet her pleading glance, persuaded himself that she was ill, out of temper, anything rather than homesick and lonely by his side. If his conscience smote him with the remembrance of an eager promise voluntarily made, he told himself that foolish vows ought never to be kept. The strangest part of it all to him was, that she did not reproach him with having broken his word. But she did not think he had broken it—only that he was wearily long about beginning to fulfil it.

A bitter season set in, and Sir Humphrey, looking at his wife's thin cheek, and the darkening trouble about her eyes, bethought him of taking her to some gay city, to a genial climate and the novelty of strange faces and places. He had watched her walking to and fro among his comfortable tenantry, in and out of their warm wholesome dwellings, and he knew what brought the quiver of pain across her eyes. She was thinking of that dreary hovel among the wilds of the Connaught hills. Where the sun always shines, he thought she would forget how cold and hunger sting. So the Christ-

mas guests were put off, and Sir Humphrey and Lady Gilbert went to winter at Florence.

Uncomplainingly Macha did her husband's bidding. She said to herself, "When we come back, early in the spring, he will take me or let me go." In the mild air of Italy she did not realize so keenly the well-remembered rigors of the Connaught winter. Her imagination was caught by the beauties that surrounded her, and for a little time Sir Humphrey thought his triumph was at hand. It was but an accident that turned the scale against him, and made shipwreck of his plans and of Macha's life. Accident or fate led Lady Gilbert, who rarely looked at anything printed, to glance into the columns of an English newspaper; and a paragraph met her eye in which certain rough statements were made regarding a famine of food and fuel in certain parts of hungry and melancholy Connaught. Instantly her long-suffering patience gave way, and all the latent fire of her nature burst forth. She flew to her husband with burning eyes, and laid her finger on the cruel lines. Sir Humphrey was in an irritable humor. Cut off from his customary country pursuits, idling in a foreign city, he had fallen into play, and had lost heavily the night before this eventful morning. The sight of his wife's feverish emotion made him angry; her passionate demand to be sent with succor to her people chafed and bewildered him. Macha! for whose good he had inconvenienced himself so seriously, left his home in winter, lowered himself to sit at the table with gamblers! —Macha to rise and turn on him with those flaming eyes! He met her with a flat denial, and uttered some bitter reproaches, upbraiding her with her imprudence and persistent folly. Having begun to give a little vent to his displeasure, he ended by saying more than he had ever meant to say. He refused to believe in the newspaper's tale of distress, and forbade her to mention her people again.

Macha stood like one stunned, slowly taking in what his angry words conveyed. As she had believed his words before, so she believed them now. They fell

upon her like blows, and when he had turned harshly away and left her under sentence of his displeasure, one only desire and determination possessed her—to get away out of this cruel world of plenty, and bring food and comfort to her famishing mother. She did not weigh the consequence of defying her husband; her agony and longing blotted out even the memory of his existence. How she made her way to Connaught who shall tell? As the lioness finds her stolen young, so did Macha scent the path to her native hills. Accustomed to rely upon her husband for everything, to follow his instructions and mark out nothing for herself, she must have made almost supernatural exertions to accomplish her end. But accomplish it she did. When her husband returned that night, half angry and half relenting, revolving plans for reconciliation, taking counsel with himself as to how he ought to deal with her, knowing very well that he meant to send a largess to those creatures on the mountain who were such a thorn in his side—when he came back to his home, Macha was gone.

Dismay, anger, terror all passed through and over him. He first swore and condemned her; then remembered her sweet face and her former patience, and almost forgave her. Uneasily he resolved to let her go and have her way. He had given her money yesterday, commanding her to spend it on her own amusement; for the present she could not want; and this reckless visit would be sure to tame her. Very soon she would be glad to return to him on any terms. Thus torn by distracting thoughts, Sir Humphrey went back alone to his English home. Pride, obstinacy, and the conviction that his wife was wrong and required punishment and humiliation, prevented his following her.

The sun was setting behind whitened peaks when Macha came wearily up the last ascent of the hills. There were the bare seamed levels, the weird rocks, the scant green patches, the dark mysterious-looking lake. "O God, I have returned!" broke from her. "There is my mother's cabin." The fierce ache that had gnawed her heart suddenly left it, and a glow of

satisfaction went tingling through her veins. Strange, instinctive, unreasoning love of home and kindred, that can forbid a human being to accept ease and pleasure in exchange for the suffering of want! Macha, who had been delivered over to abundance and luxury, cast them from her like broken fetters, and rushed forward into the embraces of her old companion and foster-mother —Poverty. This was the spot where she had danced and sung, wept and prayed; where she had been hungry and cold and full of care, and had been necessary to the existence of those she loved. Here was where she had watched, half credulous, for the fairies among the rocks; and, wholly believing, beheld with delight the procession of glorified beings in the heavens. This was the home of her passionate devotion; the strait hard bed from which she could endure to yield up her mortal breath.

Only the eagles, and whatever supernatural beings had been lurking near, heard the clamor of wild cries that arose in the isolated cabin at sight of her.

"Mother, there is something beautiful coming that looks like Macha!" cried one of the little sisters. "Macha must be dead, and coming from heaven to see us!" And they all stood solemnly in the doorway to watch the approach of the apparition. But when Macha's living lips spoke to them, and her outstretched hands touched them, then arose such cries as the rocks gave back.

The advent of mercy was not an hour too soon to bring the color of life back to pinched faces, and to put light on the fireless hearth. A long battle with hunger and cold must soon have dolefully ended had not succor arrived. Rains had drenched the turf, and the sun had not shone to dry it; and the potatoes had been washed out of the earth. Macha had known how it would be, though her husband refused to believe in the tale. Who will take oil from the flinty stone, or honey out of the rock? The very birds will not live in this barren world. Why should man cling to it with such an unaccountable love?

When Macha, having ministered to their bodily wants, and comforted their hearts with her love, lay down that night on the old familiar bed of straw, she had time to remember the husband from before whose angry face she had fled. "He will never love me more," thought she; "he will never come to seek me again." She tried to comfort herself with the thought that she was still the Macha of old, and would work for her people; but the tears poured from her eyes, and her passionate heart was not satisfied yet.

Next day she went about her work in her old dress, and tried to forget that she had ever been away from her home. Painfully she saw the misery and the squalor of it, and planned such little improvements as might lie within her reach. But soft living had spoiled Macha for privation and toil. Hunger afflicted her and her limbs were wrung with cold; she was come back to a state of things with which she was no longer fit to strive. Wandering round the dark water, she could not now feel an interest in "him who lives down in the lake"; the "living man" whom she had displeased and forsaken, whom she had loved and made unhappy, absorbed all the dreams of her imagination.

Her experience of better things, her natural good taste, and the money she had brought with her enabled her to make the projected improvements in her home; yet, when they were made, she had no pleasure in beholding them. They had cost her too dear to have the power of giving her any delight. In satisfying the fidelity of her nature on one side, she had but inflicted a mortal wound upon it on the other. The blue pinched look of hunger had gone from her mother's face; the stars were no longer visible through the roof; yet, lying there at night, and thinking about it all, Macha felt that the pinch of cold and hunger had settled on her own heart, and that the stars of love and possible happiness were forever shut out from her life. A hundred times a day she made, in imagination, impassioned acts of love and sorrow, and appeals for pardon at her husband's knees. In fancy she uttered explanations to

him, that in reality would have been impossible to her tongue. And she was too shy and too timid to attempt to write to him.

"When a wife leaves her husband," thought Macha, "of course he will not want her any more." She blamed no one but herself. "I behaved badly to my mother in leaving her at first," she reflected, "and badly to my husband in running away against his will. There must be a twist in me somehow; for I know I did not want to do wrong." Sorrow-stricken, remorseful, perplexed, she lived through the long uneventful days and nights. The strength ebbed away from her limbs, and light from her eyes. She made no complaint, for she was willing to endure bravely in expiation of the wilfulness of her sins. Her one burning desire was to see her husband before she died; yet, so self-condemned did she stand, she could not summon courage to implore of him to come.

Sir Humphrey sat at home in the depths of what may be truly called a sulk. He had more than half forgiven his wilful wife, and was ready to receive her, should she ask to return. He was willing to go and fetch her as soon as she should send for him; and it is not wonderful that he was at fault as to her motives and conduct, for her nature had always been a riddle to him. Why could she not write and tell him where she was? That much he had a right to expect from her. He was quite resolved not to go in search of her, not to attempt to communicate with her till her penitent cry should be heard, and till her love should make her ask to be taken back to his home. He told all who required to know that Lady Gilbert was paying a visit in her native land, and then sat in his loneliness awaiting some sign.

It was only a few weeks, after all, since she had left him and returned to her mountains, but many a heart has been broken in a far shorter time. The woman was one who in other circumstances would have made the happiness and well-being of those she loved; but divided duty and fidelity rent her asunder, the ardor and tenderness of her nature consumed her, and all

the powers within her wrought toward tragedy and death.

One evening Macha sat at the cabin-door, thinking of her husband, owning her trespasses, and watching the sun set redly behind the mountain-peaks, the sun that never was to rise for her again. That night she turned her eyes on the old brown crucifix which was to her as the passport to that region where the weary are at rest. She was not so glad to go as she might have been had she never met any one while walking in her girlish innocence round the margin of the lake. "Tell him I was sorry," were the last words she whispered in her mother's ear.

The sign that Sir Humphrey waited for came at last in the shape of a scrawled letter, with an unpronounceable name on the postmark. "Come to the mountain to see your son," it said; "Macha, the mother, is dead."

That sorrow is long past now. Sir Humphrey is married to a more suitable wife, and life has gone pleasantly with him. His eldest son has Macha's eyes, with often a grave, sad, unaccountable expression in them, which, in the midst of mirth, will make his father start and sigh, while the words of the poor peasant mother on the mountains will come ringing back in his ears: "'Tis only the heart that is too strong in her; and it's ill to love a stranger that must part you from your own!"

The following selection is from a quaint old volume, called "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life, a Selection from the Papers of the Late Arthur Austin." It was published at Concord, N. H., by Luther Roby, in 1831.

Among the old Covenanters it was the custom that infants about to be baptized should be carried to the font by young maidens. After the ceremony, the infants were delivered into the arms of their fathers.

THE BAPTISM.

THE rite of baptism had not been performed for several months in the Kirk of Lanark. It was the hottest time of persecution; and the inhabitants of that parish found other places in which to worship God and celebrate the ordinances of religion. It was now the Sabbath-day—and a small congregation of about a hundred souls had met for divine service in a place of worship more magnificent than any temple that human hands had ever built to Deity. Here, too, were three children about to be baptized. The congregation had not assembled to the toll of the bell—but each heart knew the hour and observed it; for there are a hundred sun-dials among the hills, woods, moors, and fields, and the shepherd and the peasant see the hours passing by them in sunshine and shadow.

The church in which they were assembled was hewn, by God's hand, out of the eternal rocks. A river rolled its way through a mighty chasm of cliffs, several hundred feet high, of which the one side presented enormous masses, and the other corresponding recesses, as if the great stone girdle had been rent by a convulsion. The channel was overspread with prodigious fragments of rock or large loose stones, some of them smooth and bare, others containing soil and verdure in their rents and fissures, and here and there crowned with shrubs and trees. The eye could at once command a long stretching vista, seemingly closed and shut up at both extremities by the coalescing cliffs. This majestic

reach of river contained pools, streams, rushing shelves and waterfalls innumerable; and when the water was low, which it now was in the common drought, it was easy to walk up this scene with the calm blue sky overhead, an utter and sublime solitude. On looking up, the soul was bowed down by the feeling of that prodigious height of unscalable and often overhanging cliff. Between the channel and the summit of the far-extended precipices were perpetually flying rooks and wood-pigeons, and now and then a hawk, filling the profound abyss with their wild cawing, deep murmur, or shrilly shriek. Sometimes a heron would stand erect and still on some little stone island, or rise up like a white cloud along the black walls of the chasm, and disappear. Winged creatures alone could inhabit this region. The fox and wild-cat chose more accessible haunts. Yet here came the persecuted Christians and worshipped God, whose hand hung over their heads those magnificent pillars and arches, scooped out those galleries from the solid rock, and laid at their feet the calm water in its transparent beauty, in which they could see themselves sitting in reflected groups, with their Bibles in their hands.

Here upon a semicircular ledge of rocks, over a narrow chasm, through which the tiny stream played in a murmuring waterfall, and divided the congregation into two equal parts, sat about a hundred persons, all devoutly listening to their minister, who stood before them on what might well be called a small natural pulpit of living stone. Up to it there led a short flight of steps, and over it waved the canopy of a tall graceful birch-tree. This pulpit stood on the middle of the channel, directly facing that congregation, and separated from them by the clear deep sparkling pool into which the scarce-heard water poured over the blackened rock. The water, as it left the pool, separated into two streams, and flowed on each side of that altar, thus placing it in an island, whose large mossy stones were richly embowered under the golden blossoms and green tresses of the broom. Divine service was closed, and

a row of maidens, all clothed in purest white, came gliding off from the congregation, and, crossing the stream on some stepping-stones, arranged themselves at the foot of the pulpit, with the infants about to be baptized. The fathers of the infants, just as if they had been in their own Kirk, had been sitting there during worship, and now stood up before the minister. The baptismal water, taken from that pellucid pool, was lying consecrated in a small hollow of one of the upright stones that formed one side or pillar of the pulpit, and the holy rite proceeded. Some of the younger ones in that semicircle kept gazing down into the pool, in which the whole scene was reflected, and now and then, in spite of the grave looks, or admonishing whispers of their elders, letting a pebble fall into the water, that they might judge of its depth from the length of time that elapsed before the clear air-bells lay sparkling on the agitated surface. The rite was over, and the religious service of the day closed by a psalm. The mighty rocks hemmed in the holy sound, and sent it in a more compacted volume, clear, sweet, and strong, up to heaven. When the psalm ceased, an echo, like a spirit's voice, was heard dying away high up among the magnificent architecture of the cliffs; and once more might be noticed, in the silence, the reviving voice of the waterfall.

Just then a large stone fell from the top of the cliff into the pool, a loud voice was heard, and a plaid hung over on the point of a shepherd's staff. Their watchful sentinel had descried danger, and this was his warning. Forthwith the congregation rose. There were paths dangerous to unpractised feet, along the ledges of the rocks, leading up to several caves and places of concealment. The more active and young assisted the elder—more especially the old Pastor, and the women with the infants; and many minutes had not elapsed till not a living creature was visible in the channel of the stream, but all of them hidden, or nearly so, in the clefts and caverns.

The shepherd who had given the alarm had lain

down again in his plaid instantly on the green sward upon the summit of these precipices. A party of soldiers were immediately upon him, and demanded what signals he had been making, and to whom; when one of them, looking over the edge of the cliff, exclaimed, "See, see! Humphrey, we have caught the whole Tabernacle of the Lord in a net at last There they. are, praising God among the stones of the river Mouss. These are the Cartland Craigs. By my soul's salvation, a noble cathedral!"

"Fling the lying sentinel over the cliffs. Here is a canting Covenanter for you, deceiving honest soldiers on the very Sabbath-day. Over with him—out of the gallery into the pit." But the shepherd had vanished like a shadow; and mixing with the tall green broom and bushes, was making his unseen way towards a wood. "Satan has saved his servant; but come, my lads—follow me—I know the way down into the bed of the stream—and the steps up to Wallace's cave. They are called the 'Kittle Nine Stanes.' The hunt's up. We'll be all in at the death. Halloo—my boys—halloo!"

The soldiers dashed down a less precipitous part of the wooded banks, a little below the "craigs," and hurried up the channel. But when they reached the altar where the old gray-haired minister had been seen standing, and the rocks that had been covered with people, all was silent and solitary—not a creature was to be seen.

"Here is a Bible dropt by some of them," cried a soldier, and, with his foot, he spun it away into the pool. "A bonnet—a bonnet,"—cried another—"now for the pretty sanctified face that rolled its demure eyes below it." But, after a few jests and oaths, the soldiers stood still, eyeing with a kind of mysterious dread the black and silent walls of the rock that hemmed them in, and hearing only the small voice of the stream that sent a profounder stillness through the heart of that majestic solitude.

"Curse these cowardly Covenanters — what if they tumble down upon our heads pieces of rock from their hiding-place? Advance? Or retreat?" There was no

reply, for a slight fear was upon every man; musket or bayonet could be of little use to men obliged to clamber up rocks along slender paths, leading, they knew not where; and they were aware that armed men, now-a-days, worshipped God,—men of iron hearts, who feared not the glitter of the soldier's arms—neither barrel nor bayonet—men of long stride, firm step, and broad chest, who, on the open field, would have overthrown the marshalled line, and gone first and foremost if a city had to be taken by storm.

As the soldiers were standing together irresolute, a noise came upon their ears like distant thunder, but even more appalling; and a light current of air, as if propelled by it, passed whispering along the sweet-briars, and the broom, and the tresses of the birch-trees. It came deepening, and rolling, and roaring on, and the very Cartland Craigs shook to their foundation as if in an earthquake.

"The Lord have mercy upon us—what is this?" And down fell many of the miserable wretches on their knees, and some on their faces, upon the sharp-pointed rocks. Now, it was like the sound of many myriads of chariots rolling on their iron axles down the stony channel of the torrent. The old gray-haired minister issued from the mouth of Wallace's Cave, and said, with a loud voice, "The Lord God terrible reigneth." A water-spout had burst up among the moorlands, and the river, in its power, was at hand. There it came—tumbling along into that long reach of cliffs, and in a moment filled it with one mass of waves. Huge, agitated clouds of foam rode on the surface of a blood-red torrent. An army must have been swept off by that flood. The soldiers perished in a moment—but high up in the cliffs, above the sweep of destruction, were the Covenanters—men, women, and children, uttering prayers to God, unheard by themselves, in that raging thunder.

The thrilling pictures of wolves pursuing a sleigh full of people, which are familiar to all students of Russian art, have a counterpart in literature in this powerful, almost heart-sickening, story by Tola Dorian. It originally appeared in *Le Figaro*, and has been translated for ROMANCE by V. E. T.

MADAME NOVAR'S WOLF HUNT.

Two men and a woman, in a vast room, furnished half in European, half in Oriental, style.

A wide, low divan, covered with rich stuffs and piled with pillows, against one wall; skins of wild beasts on the floor, beneath the furniture, everywhere; arm-chairs in the Voltaire style, with rockers; low seats; an elaborately carved dresser, bearing pieces of massive silver; a high stove in finely-painted Holland *faience;* and a square table covered with a red cloth, upon which steams the samovar in the midst of transparent cups and glasses of Bohemian crystal, incrusted with filigree work. Upon the walls, draped with cashmere, several faded pastels, photographs and a large oil-painting, in which, beneath a dull sky, a hunting-party gallops after a very red fox; riders, horses and dogs in strong relief against the vivid green of the fields.

One of the men, with hair already growing gray, eyes and eyebrows very black and a wearied-looking face, is stretched out in an arm-chair, looking through a newspaper. He wears a short, brown, velvet coat and soft-soled shoes. The other, a young lieutenant in undress uniform, close coat, unbuttoned over a shirt of scarlet silk, vigorous and fresh-colored, with cropped hair and golden mustache, a frank smile on his slightly full lips, hands behind his back, walks up and down the room with a firm, regular step.

The woman, young, slight, with flaxen braids falling low on her neck; her waist imprisoned in a dark-blue blouse, girdled by a silver belt set with turquoises; a gold, belled bracelet on her slender wrist; reclines on the Turkish divan and smokes a cigarette.

Her eyes, sparkling, audacious and smiling, dilate now and then, and have swift flames and shadows like those of the felines; indolent and weary in repose, feverishly eager in movement, she is a singular mixture of vivacity and nonchalance, of weakness and of force; the lines of her mouth betray an indomitable will.

Outside, a clear night of silvery whiteness. On the window-panes the hoar-frost has traced wonderful imaginary flowers, which grow rainbow-tinted on the glass.

Within, an atmosphere warm, intoxicating, filled with the fumes of tea, of tobacco and of that subtle and particular scent of skilfully-tanned skins, commonly called the perfume of Russian leather.

For some time absolute silence has been maintained, and the young woman yawns as she changes her position and then sips from a fragile Japanese cup the smoking, yellow liquid it contains.

The officer approaches her, his brown eyes beaming, and seats himself near her, at her feet. She returns his tender, joyous look by a coquettish pout.

"What shall we do to-morrow?" she murmurs, throwing her arm back of her head; the gesture sets tinkling the bell on her bracelet. "What are your plans, prince?" She looks at the reader in the arm-chair.

"We must try the country near Chenaie," replies he, reluctantly laying down his journal. "The peasants are complaining; it seems that each night near the banks of Lake Vert the wolves are ravaging. It was a horse the other night; yesterday, a cow. They tore it to pieces just before dawn, and it was yet warm when found near the road—the bandits!"

"Then we take the dogs?" questions Madame Novar.

"Yes, the dogs are in fine condition,—the great black hounds impatient; they ask only to sharpen their teeth on the wolves' bones."

"There is a ring around the moon," observes the officer. "A hard frost for to-morrow!"

"Oh, I do not fear the cold, with habit, hat and

gloves. In seal-skin one can brave anything; but do not forget the champagne, prince."

"All shall be done as you order, madame," replies the host.

Silence again.

"Listen, listen.—I have an idea!" suddenly exclaims Madame Novar, springing to her feet from her attitude of indolence. In an instant she is all alive; she throws back, with a quick, bird-like movement of the head, the heavy braids of her somewhat disordered hair, and her half-closed eyes open wide and eager.

"What is it, what?" questions the young lieutenant, with a look of naïve admiration spreading over his square, honest face.

"I wish at once, to-night, that we organize a hunt, a *real* hunt in a sleigh, *troïka!** Quick, quick, prince! Give orders, call the servants! See what snow, what light, what life, all calling us forth! Let us go; order the horses; I run for my wraps."

"Madame," replies the prince with hesitation as he rises from his chair, "it would give me the greatest pleasure, but——"

"But what? Do you want to remain snuggled in your cushions, sipping your tea, until you turn into a dormouse or a mummy? Why, look!"—running to the window and pulling back with hasty hand the heavy curtains: a flood of whiteness enters in torrents into the room, dimly-lighted by two shaded lamps. "See, it is a Niagara of electric waves! An apotheosis of fiery brightness! Is it possible to remain at home when such a night holds festival?"

"Dear madame," answers the prince in a slightly annoyed tone, "to be frank, it is my duty to warn you that I am not sure of my horses. Certainly the commands of a beautiful woman are absolute—I have passed my life in submission thereto—but you must know that in this case all depends upon the good conduct and experience of the horses. If they should run away and upset us, no earthly power could save us from

* A Russian mode of driving three horses.

the wolves' teeth, if those animals should be numerous. My wheel-horse is perfect, an old trotter of great speed. That one will not fail us, but the leaders! They are young, too young, madame. They arrived from the Don this spring only; and are not yet sufficiently broken. It is true they have hunted—coursing, which is different; and, also, by day only. At night, during these hard frosts, the wolves come in troops and are fearless. No, madame, take the advice of an old huntsman and do not risk your life."

"You are joking, prince," interrupts Madame Novar with a dry laugh. "But, now I happen to think, you are afraid perhaps? Ah! take care, I might believe you are growing old. That *would* be grave, would it not?"

She says these words in a teasing, defiant tone, and her eyes have such a mocking expression that the prince makes no response, save touching a bell near him.

A boy-servant appears, in the costume of a Cossack.

"Tell Timothy to harness Faust in the middle, Arabi and Arès on either side, of the large hunting-sleigh. Let Andrew prepare the guns and the pig; have all ready to start in half an hour."

The small Cossack disappears noiselessly, and the prince rises to follow him.

The young lieutenant then approaches Madame Novar. His eyes are anxious; there is a hesitating smile on his lips.

"Dear madame," he whispers, almost timidly, "I do not believe myself grown old or cowardly; nevertheless I entreat you to give up this project—tempting, I know, to a woman like you. Pray spare your host and his servants a peril so terrible, for with unreliable horses, at this season of the year, when the wolves are numerous and ferocious, the risk is too great. I implore you, do not push them to undertake it. Our moral responsibility——"

"Serge!" exclaims Madame Novar with a ringing burst of laughter. "You also? Are you not ashamed? The more we are in danger, the better we feel how good

it is to live. The more sensations I have, the happier I shall be."

With a slight gesture of reproach, the lieutenant answers: "For one's self, yes, but for the others?"

A large sleigh, in form a half boat, the horses harnessed to the prow, the coachman standing at the helm, waits in the avenue at the foot of the wide entrance-steps.

Between the shafts, steady and patient, stands a large brown horse. He is high in the withers, with well-rounded forehead surmounted by long, pointed ears and illumined by eyes with great, shining pupils. On either side of him are the runners; one, iron-gray, on the right; the other, a bay, on the left. Thin and muscular as grey-hounds are they both, with long manes and tails. The coachman, Timothy, bold, robust and with piercing eyes, gathers the reins in his hands, and gravely salutes the prince, descending the steps and preceding Madame Novar. That lady has enveloped her slight form in a long seal-skin cloak; her eyes dance with merriment beneath the gauze veil of her fur hat; a light-weight carbine is suspended from her shoulder.

The lieutenant follows her with stout Andrew, in a sheepskin coat and bearing a half-dozen spare guns.

A wonderful liquid brightness reveals clearly every detail of harness, arms, men and horses.

Madame Novar runs down the stone steps, gleaming like Carrara marble beneath the moon's magic light, and jumps into the sleigh, followed by the men. At the same instant, inarticulate cries, grunts and squeals resound from beneath the fur robes; and the horses start on the gallop.

The bells have been removed from sleigh and harness, and the team moves almost noiselessly over the soft snow. An occasional whistle from the coachman and a snort from one of the horses are the only sounds heard.

They pass over undulating moors, run through a sleeping village, penetrate a small wood with numerous clearings, and at length reach a vast pine-forest.

At a cross-road Timothy comes to a halt.

"It is here, Excellency," he says.

"Are we far from that point of Lake Vert where the Douria has its source?" asks the prince.

"We are within ten yards of it," answers the man; "this road leads straight there, following the border of the lake until it runs into the steppe towards the main road, which it rejoins before the postal-station."

"The spot indicated by the game-keeper is just before the source," the prince informs his companions.

"Then make the pig squeal," orders Madame Novar.

"Better wait a bit," suggests Andrew. "The road is full of curves just here, and the ditches are dangerous; once we are past the borders of the lake——"

"Imbecile!" interrupts Madame Novar, "do what you are bid."

Immediately, from the depths of the sleigh, comes a horrible concert of grunts, shrieks and lugubrious squeals, such as only a pig can give forth; whether he is being bled to death or only having his ear pinched, his vocabulary is the same.

Madame Novar smiles with a triumphant air. The lieutenant looks at her, then turns away his eyes with an imperceptible shrug of his shoulders.

The discordant clamor rings out on the rarified air. Andrew now and again silences it, while all listen. Suddenly, during one of those intervals, a light gallop is heard approaching from the depths of the forest. The dry branches crack; the hunters stand ready; the horses tremble. Soon can be distinguished stealthy, regular steps, like those of a hunting pack, and swift, angular forms glide and bound among the bushes. The horses snort and rear; the wheeler plants his feet firmly, striving to restrain them, thus, already, giving proof of his coolness and vigor. Along the borders of the forest can be seen gleaming, green and phosphorescent, the wolves' eyes.

Timothy gives rein to the *troïka*, and the trotter steps out with even, powerful steps, holding back his com-

panions, bathed in sweat and trembling in every fiber as the scent of the wild-beasts enters their nostrils.

The wolves, seeing their prey escape, give chase; they are about twelve, their number augments each time an opening in the wood permits them to be counted.

They run with great bounds, two or three together; uneasy but not yet audacious, they seem inspired by curiosity rather than by ferocity.

Madame Novar impatiently awaits them, grasping her carbine in readiness for the signal to shoot; the prince stands up, straight and motionless, frowning slightly; the lieutenant, with ardent eyes beneath a calm brow, watches Andrew, who is pinching the pig to make it squeal.

The wolves are now galloping in close ranks, only fifteen or twenty feet from the hunters.

The team insensibly augments its pace, the runners pulling hard on the reins. Suddenly one of them makes a false step, stumbles and falls, but rises again with a superb bound; the sleigh, with a violent jolt, again moves rapidly on. During the stop, however, some of the wolves have precipitated themselves in advance of the hunters. They run on ahead, then stand and wait for their approach.

The young horses, seized with terror at seeing the wolves before them, lose their heads completely.

Shots ring out on the air, and four wolves roll on the ground. Their companions fall upon them and tear them to pieces. It does not take long; and again the band, with piercing yelps, pursues the sleigh, which has already gained a slight advance. They overtake it and draw near, crowding against each other, without fear and grown rapacious now that the smell and taste of blood have sharpened every ferocious instinct. Again the party fire into the compact mass. One wolf only falls, but with such a howl of pain that the runners, restrained until now by the coachman's iron muscles, start upon a mad run; the wheeler, powerless to withstand their united efforts, lets them pull him on, while Timothy, fast losing strength, scarcely directs their course.

The sleigh dashes against a bush, bounds over a root, at times, when the road turns sharply, is half upset, regaining its equilibrium only by the combined efforts of its occupants, who, holding fast to straps on either side, have all they can do to keep from being thrown out.

The prince, grown very pale, gives whispered orders to Timothy. The guns lie useless among the fur rugs; the jolting is so great that Andrew is unable to recharge them.

Madame Novar no longer laughs, but her eyes gleam strangely; she watches the horses with her back to the wolves.

"A superb animal! He is astonishing, that trotter! What is he called, prince?"

"Faust," is the reply in an excessively dry tone. "You are aware, doubtless, madame, that we are in great peril?"

"I know, I know. If we are thrown out, nothing will remain of us but the barrels of our guns and the buttons of our coats; but, somehow, I have confidence in Faust. Marvellous, that animal, is he not?"

"Excellency," says Timothy turning around an instant, "I now begin to hope that we shall reach the lake in safety, but, there, I do not know how we shall manage. The banks are bad, narrow and slippery, the grade steep."

"Take this," says the prince, giving him his hunting-knife. "If we upset, I do not wish to fall alive among those brutes."

"I understand," is the man's reply.

"Well, Serge," murmurs Madame Novar, pale but smiling, to the lieutenant, "are you afraid?"

"I, madame?" slowly turning his eyes to her face. "Exposing oneself uselessly to death seems absurd to me; death imposed, as now, by a woman's whim, is criminal."

Madame Novar, stunned, seems scarcely to understand.

"Is it to me that you speak that way?"

"Yes, Marta, to you." He calls her for the first time by her Christian name.

She feels vaguely that something has broken, a bond that was dear to her heart, her capricious, heedless heart, but essentially womanly after all, and therefore too sure of its own power.

Her tortured conscience now makes the danger seem tenfold greater. And what danger! The horses, without bits and crazed with terror, run wildly on with lowered heads, while the wolves, with long-sustained, harassing gallop, obstinately follow at their heels. All at once, Timothy calls out in a hollow tone:

"The lake!"

The forest opens before them, a large space without trees widens out, and the scarcely perceptible road descends towards the ice-covered lake, with its almost vertical banks. The least false step, the slightest swerve aside of the horses, and men and beasts will roll dispersed on the snowy declivity at the mercy of the open-mouthed horde which is tracking them.

The team go flying downwards, Faust no longer essaying to withhold their mad career; he trots furiously, throwing out his feet with the superb, wide motions of a thoroughbred.

"My God!" breathes out the prince. "Mad, quite mad!" sighs he, and with his thin, long hands he pulls his cap more firmly over his forehead and, turning his back on Madame Novar, draws closer to his coachman.

That functionary is pulling upon the reins until the veins of his neck look ready to burst.

"Let them run. It is of no use, nothing human can save us now," says the prince.

"Holy Virgin!" thunders out Timothy. "If we could only round the lake, the steppe is beyond and we should be saved."

Madame Novar is motionless, with bowed head and parted lips.

The lieutenant smokes a cigarette, seated on the edge of the sleigh, maintaining himself there with an iron grip.

Like a cannon-ball the horses bound down the road bordering the lake, the pursuing wolves losing not an inch of distance.

Perceiving all at once a sort of quagmire beneath his feet, Faust lifts his head, and with eyes unnaturally enlarged and blood-red nostrils measures the danger; for he knows as well as a human creature what fate will be his should his mad companions fall and entangle him in their harness.

With all his force he bears backward, each of his steps sinking deeply in the ground.

The wolves, by some unknown instinct, scent their prey near and pursue with renewed ferocity.

At a turning, sleigh, men, horses and wolves seem on the point of being precipitated into the abyss. The road, covered with snow, descends so abruptly and turns so sharply that there is scarcely footing for the horses.

The old wheeler then exerts all his strength and, holding back the heavy vehicle that crushes against him, and resisting the efforts of the team to drag him onward, with a mighty effort throws himself to one side, pushing the gray horse to the right of the road, thus forcing him to follow the narrow path along the lake. But the horse on the left, the bay, free in his traces, suddenly slips on the extreme edge of the steep banks and falls downwards, the ground crumbling beneath his feet. Faust rears, and his sudden, backward movement seats the gray horse upon his haunches. With a hoarse snort of pain, he then sustains the weight of the fallen animal, who struggles, feet in air, held by his harness only.

A simultaneous cry issues from the throats of the horrified group, face to face with a frightful death; the moving mass of wolves, climbing one upon another in their eagerness to come at their prey, howl madly with hungry fury while the desperate hunters fire quick-succeeding shots among them.

Timothy then cautiously slides along the shafts, sustaining himself by one hand, with marvellous dexterity, while with the other he cuts, with a single knife-

stroke, the traces of the fallen horse. The poor animal rolls downward with a neigh of agony, disappearing instantly beneath the horde of wolves whose voracious yelps long resound, while the sleigh, borne swiftly on, passes the perilous declivity, emerges from the wood, and at last reaches the steppe.

About two *verstes* more they traverse in silence, and then a light can be seen glimmering in the distance. Timothy directs his smoking team towards it, and soon the horses enter, like a hurricane, the gates of the postal-station and stop before its lighted windows.

One instant the brave old wheel-horse breathes deeply; he utters a harsh neigh; then, with a mighty shiver, he falls—to rise no more. He had burst a vein during his supernatural effort to save the sleigh from overturning, and bleeds internally; but with the courage and force of his race he has endured to the last. Pale and breathless, the hunters stand around the noble animal which has given them his life.

Timothy does not conceal his grief; the prince takes off his cap as he gazes on the horse, already stiffening, with bloody mouth and extended legs, his long mane trailing over the snow; then, stern of aspect, without a word, he moves away.

Madame Novar, for a moment abashed, then lifts her head with a gesture of impatience, "Well, my dear lieutenant, we are saved, but we held by a hair only," says she, holding out her hand to the young man.

That gentleman bows profoundly.

"You are right, madame, we held by a hair only."

"How strangely you say that! Do you know that you called me 'Marta' during the danger?" adds she with a rippling laugh.

"Yes, madame, for the first and for the last time. The hair has broken, the hair which bound me to a cherished hope."

"Dare one ask the explanation of this enigma?"

"Madame, I adore courage; I could see a woman expose herself to the greatest peril—if it please her so to

do—and admire her only the more; but I should despise her if her fancy cost the life even of a dog. How then judge one whose whim has exposed four persons besides herself to the most imminent danger? It is difficult for us men, as you well know, to seem to draw back when courage is required. That is a puerile but nevertheless powerful exaction imposed by our masculine self-love. A woman taking advantage of that feeling would be an assassin, an intentional assassin. Also, no matter what may be her age, condition or rank, a woman who is not *motherly* toward all beings, great or small, who surround her, is not, in my opinion, a true woman. Permit me, therefore, madame, to offer you my congratulations on the fortunate result of your caprice—and to bid you—adieu!"

Here is a rollicking Irish story, full of the flavor of the soil. It is from the pen of the most characteristic of the Irish novelists, William Carleton, who says in his introduction: "Those who peruse this story are not to imagine that I am gravely writing it in my study, but that they are sitting in the chimney-corner at an Irish wake, and that some droll *Senachie*, his face lit up into an expression of broad farcical humor, is talking."

THE PUDDING BEWITCHED.

"Moll Roe Rafferty was the son—daughter I mane—of ould Jack Rafferty, who was remarkable for a habit he had of always wearing his head undher his hat; but indeed the same family was a quare one, as everybody knew that was acquainted wid them. It was said of them—but whether it was thrue or not I won't undhertake to say, for 'fraid I'd tell a lie—that whenever they didn't wear shoes or boots they always went barefooted; but I hard aftherwards that this was disputed, so rather than say anything to injure their character, I'll let that pass. Now, ould Jack Rafferty had two sons, Paddy and Molly—hut! what are you all laughing at?—I mane a son and daughter, and it was generally believed among the neighbors, that they were brother and sisther. Throth there was many ugly things put out on them that I don't wish to repate, such as that neither Jack nor his son Paddy ever walked a perch widout puttin' one foot afore the other like a salmon; an' I know it was whispered about that, whinever Moll Roe slep', she had an out-of-the-way custom of keepin' her eyes shut. If she did, however, for that matther the loss was her own; for sure we all know that when one comes to shut their eyes, they can't see as far before them as another.

"Moll Roe Rafferty, daughter of ould Jack Rafferty, was a fine young bouncin' girl, large and lavish, wid a purty head o' hair on her like scarlet, that bein' one of the raisons why she was called *Roe*, or red; her arms an'

cheeks were much the color of the hair, an' her saddle nose was the purtiest thing of its kind that ever was on a face. Her fists—for, thank goodness, she was well sarved wid them too—had a strong simularity to two thumpin' turnips, reddened by the sun; an' to keep all right and tight, she had a temper as fiery as her head —for, indeed, it was well known that all the Rafferties were *warm*-hearted. She had a twist, too, in one of her eyes that was very becomin' in its way, and made her poor husband, when she got him, take it into his head that she could see round a corner. She found him out in many quare things, widout doubt; but whether it was owin' to that or not, I wouldn't undertake to say, *for fraid I'd tell a lie.*

"Well, begad, anyhow it was Moll Roe that was the *dilsy*. It happened that there was a nate vagabone in the neighborhood, just as much overburdened wid beauty as herself, and he was named Gusty Gillespie. Gusty, the Lord guard us, was what they call a black-mouth Prosbytarian, and wouldn't keep Christmas-day, the blagard, except what they call 'ould style.' Gusty was rather good-lookin' when seen in the dark, as well as Moll herself; and, indeed, it was purty well known that everything was deranged for their marriage, and it was appointed that they should be spliced by the Rev. Samuel M'Shuttle, the Prosbytarian parson, on a certain Sunday.

"Now this was the first marriage that had happened for a long time in the neighborhood betune a black-mouth an' a Catholic, an' of coorse there was strong objections on both sides against it. At any rate, faix, there was one of the bride's uncles, ould Harry Connolly, a fairy-man, who could cure all complaints wid a secret he had, and as he didn't wish to see his niece married upon sich a fellow, he fought bittherly against the match. All Moll's friends, however, stood up for the marriage, barrin' him.

"Well, the day arrived, and Moll, as became her, went to mass, and Gusty to meeting, afther which they were to join one another in Jack Rafferty's, where the

priest, Father M'Sorley, was to slip up afther mass to take his dinner wid them, and to keep Misther M'Shuttle, who was to marry them, company. Nobody remained at home but ould Jack Rafferty an' his wife, who stopped to dress the dinner, for, to tell the truth, it was to be a great let-out entirely; and when Mrs. Rafferty was goin' to tie up a big bag pudden, in walks Harry Connolly, the fairy-man, in a rage, and shouts out, 'Blood and blunderbushes, what are yez here for?'

"'Arra why, Harry? Why, avick?'

"'Why, the sun's in the suds and the moon in the high Horick's; there's a clipstick comin' an, an' there you're both as unconsarned as if it was about to rain mether. Go out and cross yourselves three times in the name o' the four Mandromarvins, for as prophecy says: —Fill the pot, Eddy, supernaculum—a blazing star's a rare spectaculum. Go out both of you and look at the sun, I say, an' ye'll see the condition he's in—off!'

"Begad, sure enough, Jack gave a bounce to the door, and his wife leaped like a two-year-ould, till they were both got on a stile beside the house to see what was wrong in the sky.

"'Arrah, what is it, Jack,' said she, 'can you see anything?'

"'No,' says he, 'sorra the full o' my eye of anything I can spy, barrin' the sun himself, that's not visible in regard of the clouds. God guard us! I doubt there's something to happen.'

"'If there wasn't, Jack, what 'ud put Harry, that knows so much, in the state he's in?'

"'I doubt it's this marriage,' said Jack; 'betune ourselves, it's not over an' above religious for Moll to marry a blackmouth, but it can't be helped now, though you see not a taste o' the sun is willin' to show his face upon it.'

"'As to that,' says the wife, winkin' wid both her eyes, 'if Gusty's satisfied wid Moll, it's enough. I know who'll carry the whip hand, anyhow; but in the mane time let us ax Harry 'ithin what ails the sun.'

"Well, they accordianly went in an' put the question to him.

"'Harry, what's wrong, ahagur? What is it now, for if anybody alive knows, 'tis yourself?'

"'Ah!' said Harry, screwin' his mouth wid a kind of a dhry smile, 'the sun has a hard twist o' the cholic; but never mind that, I tell you you'll have a merrier weddin' than you think, that's all'; and havin' said this, he put on his hat and left the house.

"Now, Harry's answer relieved them very much, and so, afther calling to him to be back for the dinner, Jack sat down to take a shough o' the pipe, and the wife lost no time in tying up the pudden and puttin' it in the pot to be boiled.

"In this way things went on well enough for a while, Jack smokin' away, an' the wife cookin' and dhressin' at the rate of a hunt. At last, Jack, while sittin', as I said, contentedly at the fire, thought he could persave an odd dancin' kind o' motion in the pot that puzzled him a good deal.

"'Katty,' said he, 'what the dickens is in this pot on the fire?'

"'Nerra thing but the big pudden. Why do you ax?' says she.

"'Why,' said he, 'if ever a pot tuck it into its head to dance a jig, this did. Thundher and sparbles, look at it!'

"Begad, it was thrue enough; there was the pot bobbin' up an' down from side to side, jiggin' it away as merry as a grig; an' it was quite aisy to see that it wasn't the pot itself, but what was inside of it, that brought about the hornpipe.

"'Be the hole o' my coat,' shouted Jack, 'there's something alive in it, or it would never cut sich capers!'

"'Be gorra, there is, Jack; something shtrange entirely has got into it. Wirra, man alive, what's to be done?'

"Jist as she spoke, the pot seemed to cut the buckle in prime style, and afther a spring that 'ud shame a dancin'-masther, off flew the lid, and out bounced the

pudden itself, hoppin', as nimble as a pea on a drum-head, about the floor. Jack blessed himself, and Katty crossed herself. Jack shouted, and Katty screamed, 'In the name of goodness, keep your distance, no one here injured you!'

"The pudden, however, made a set at him, and Jack lepped first on a chair and then on the kitchen table to avoid it. It then danced toward Kitty, who was now repatin' her prayers at the top of her voice, while the cunnin' thief of a pudden was hoppin' and jiggin' it round her, as if it was amused at her distress.

"'If I could get the pitchfork,' said Jack, 'I'd dale wid it—by goxty I'd thry its mettle.'

"'No, no,' shouted Katty, thinkin' there was a fairy in it; 'let us spake it fair. Who knows what harm it might do? Aisy now,' said she to the pudden, 'aisy, dear; don't harm honest people that never meant to offend you. It wasn't us—no, in throth, it was ould Harry Connolly that bewitched you; pursue *him* if you wish, but spare a woman like me.'

"The pudden, bedad, seemed to take her at her word, and danced away from her toward Jack, who, like the wife, believin' there was a fairy in it, an' that spakin' it fair was the best plan, thought he would give it a soft word as well as her.

"'Plase your honor,' said Jack, 'she only spaiks the truth; an', upon my voracity, we both feels much oblaiged to your honor for your quietness. Faith, it's quite clear that, if you weren't a gentlemanly pudden all out, you'd act otherwise. Ould Harry, the rogue, is your mark; he's jist gone down the road there, and if you go fast, you'll overtake him. Be me song, your dancin' masther did his duty, anyhow. Thank your honor! God speed you, an' may you never meet wid a parson or alderman in your thravels!'

"Jist as Jack spoke, the pudden appeared to take the hint, for it quietly hopped out, and as the house was directly on the roadside, turned down toward the bridge, the very way that ould Harry went. It was very natural of coorse that Jack and Katty should go out to see

how it intended to thravel; and, as the day was Sunday, it was but natural, too, that a greater number of people than usual were passin' the road. This was a fact; and when Jack and his wife were seen followin' the pudden, the whole neighborhood was soon up and afther it.

"'Jack Rafferty, what is it? Katty, ahagur, will you tell us what it manes?'

"'Why,' replied Katty, 'it's my big pudden that's bewitched, an' it's now hot foot pursuin'——'; here she stopped, not wishin' to mention her brother's name —'*some one* or other that surely put *pistrogues* an it.' *

"This was enough; Jack, now seein' that he had assistance, found his courage comin' back to him; so says he to Katty, 'Go home,' says he, 'an' lose no time in makin' another pudden as good, an' here's Paddy Scanlan's wife, Bridget, says she'll let you boil it on her fire, as you'll want our own to dress the rest o' the dinner: and Paddy himself will lend me a pitchfork, for purshuin to the morsel of that same pudden will escape till I let the wind out of it, now that I've the neighbors to back an' support me,' says Jack.

"This was agreed to, and Katty went back to prepare a fresh pudden, while Jack an' half the townland pursued the other wid spades, graips, pitchforks, scythes, flails, and all possible description of instruments. On the pudden went, however, at the rate of about six Irish miles an hour, an' sich a chase never was seen. Catholics, Prodestants, an' Prosbytarians, were all afther it, armed, as I said, an' bad end to the thing but its own activity could save it.

"'Where is it goin'?' asked one. 'My life for you, it's on its way to Meeting. Three cheers for it, if it turns to Carntaul.' 'Prod the sowl out of it, if it's a Prodestan',' shouted the others; 'if it turns to the left, slice it into pancakes. We'll have no Prodestan' puddens here.'

"Begad, by this time the people were on the point of beginnin' to have a regular fight about it, when, very

* Put it under fairy influence.

fortunately, it took a short turn down a little by-lane that led toward the Methodist praichin-house, an' in an instant all parties were in an uproar against it as a Methodist pudden. 'It's a Wesleyan,' shouted several voices; 'an' by this an' by that, into a Methodist chapel it won't put a foot to-day, or we'll lose a fall. Let the wind out of it. Come, boys, where's your pitch-forks?'

"The divle purshuin to the one of them, however, ever could touch the pudden, an' jist when they thought they had it up against the gavel of the Methodist chapel, begad it gave them the slip, and hops over to the left, clane into the river, and sails away before all their eyes as light as an egg-shell.

"In the manetime, Katty Rafferty, for 'fraid the dinner might come short, went home and made another pudden much about the same size as the one that had escaped, and bringin' it over to their next neighbor, Paddy Scanlan's, it was put into a pot and placed on the fire to boil, hopin' that it might be done in time, espishilly as they were to have the ministher, who loved a warm slice of a good pudden as well as e'er a gintleman in Europe.

"Anyhow, the day passed; Moll and Gusty were made man an' wife, an' no two could be more lovin'. Their friends that had been asked to the weddin' were saunterin' about in pleasant little groups till dinner-time, chattin' an' laughin'; but, above all things, shtrivin' to account for the figaries of the pudden; for, to tell the truth, its adventures had now gone through the whole parish.

"Well, at any rate, dinner-time was dhrawin' near, and Paddy Scanlan was sittin' comfortably wid his wife at the fire, the pudden boilen before their eyes, when in walks Harry Connolly, in a flutter, shoutin'—'Blood an' blunderbushes, what are yez here for?'

"'Arra, why, Harry—why, avick?' said Mrs. Scanlan.

"'Why,' said Harry, 'the sun's in the suds an' the moon in the high Horicks! Here's a clipstick comin' an, an' there you sit as unconsarned as if it was about

to rain mether! Go out both of you, an' look at the sun, I say, and ye'll see the condition he's in—off!'

"'Ay, but, Harry, what's that rowled up in the tail of your cothamore?'

"'Out wid yez,' said Harry, 'an' pray aginst the clipstick—the sky's fallin'!'

"Begad, it was hard to say whether Paddy or the wife got out first, they were so much alarmed by Harry's wild thin face, an piercin' eyes; so out they went to see what was wondherful in the sky, an' kep' lookin' an' lookin' in every direction, but not a thing was to be seen, barrin' the sun shinin' down wid great good humor, an' not a single cloud in the sky.

"Paddy an' the wife now came in laughin', to scould Harry, who, no doubt, was a great wag in his way when he wished. 'Musha, bad scran to you, Harry——' They had time to say no more, howandiver, for, as they were goin' into the door, they met him comin' out of it wid a reek of smoke out of his tail like a lime-kiln.

"'Harry,' shouted Bridget, 'my sowl to glory, but the tail of your cothamore's a fire—you'll be burned. Don't you see the smoke that's out of it?'

"'Cross yourselves three times,' said Harry, widout stoppin', or even looking behind him, 'for, as the prophecy says—Fill the pot, Eddy——' They could hear no more, for Harry appeared to feel like a man that carried something a great deal hotter than he wished, as anyone might see by the liveliness of his motions, and the quare faces he was forced to make as he went along.

"'What the dickens is he carryin' in the skirts of his big coat?' asked Paddy.

"'My sowl to happiness, but maybe he has stole the pudden,' said Bridget, 'for it's known that many a shtrange thing he does.'

"They immediately examined the pot, but found that the pudden was there as safe as tuppence, an' this puzzled them the more, to think what it was he could be carryin' about wid him in the manner he did. But little they knew what he had done while they were skygazin'!

"Well, anyhow, the day passed and the dinner was ready, an' no doubt but a fine gatherin' there was to partake of it. The Prosbytarian ministher met the Methodist praicher—a divilish stretcher of an appetite he had, in throth—on their way to Jack Rafferty's, an' as he knew he could take the liberty, why he insisted on his dinin' wid him; for, afther all, begad, in thim times the clargy of all descriptions lived upon the best footin' among one another, not all as one as now—but no matther. Well, they had nearly finished their dinner, when Jack Rafferty himself axed Katty for the pudden; but, jist as he spoke, in it came as big as a mess-pot.

"'Gintlemen,' said he, 'I hope none of you will refuse tastin' a bit of Katty's pudden; I don't mane the dancin' one that tuck to its thravels to-day, but a good solid fellow that she med since.'

"'To be sure we won't,' replied the priest; 'so, Jack, put a thrifle on them three plates at your right hand, and send them over here to the clargy, an' maybe,' he said, laughin'—for he was a droll, good-humored man—'maybe, Jack, we won't set you a proper example.'

"'Wid a heart an' a half, yar reverence an' gintlemen; in throth, it's not a bad example ever any of you set us at the likes, or ever will set us, I'll go bail. An' sure I only wish it was betther fare I had for you; but we're humble people, gintlemen, and so you can't expect to meet here what you would in higher places.'

"'Betther a male of herbs,' said the Methodist praicher, 'where pace is——' He had time to go no farther, however; for much to his amazement, the priest and the ministher started up from the table jist as he was goin' to swallow the first spoonful of the pudden, and before you could say Jack Robinson, started away at a lively jig down the floor.

"At this moment a neighbor's son came runnin' in, an' tould them that the parson was comin' to see the new-married couple, an' wish them all happiness; an' the words were scarcely out of his mouth when he made his appearance. What to think he knew not, when he

saw the ministher footing it away at the rate of a weddin'. He had very little time, however, to think; for, before he could sit down, up starts the Methodist praicher, and clappin' his two fists in his sides, chimes in in great style along wid him.

"'Jack Rafferty,' says he—and, by the way, Jack was his tenant—'what the dickens does all this mane?' says he; 'I'm amazed!'

"'The's not a particle o' me can tell you,' says Jack; 'but will your reverence jist taste a morsel o' pudden, merely that the young couple may boast that you ait at their weddin'; for sure if *you* wouldn't, *who* would?'

"'Well,' says he, 'to gratify them I will; so just a morsel. But, Jack, this bates Bannagher,' says he again, puttin' the spoonful o' pudden into his mouth, 'has there been dhrink here?'

"'Oh, the divle a *spudh*,' says Jack, 'for although there's plinty in the house, faith, it appears the gintlemen wouldn't wait for it. Unless they tuck it elsewhere, I can make nothin' of this.'

"He had scarcely spoken when the parson, who was an active man, cut a caper a yard high, an' before you could bless yourself, the three clargy were hard at work dancin', as if for a wager. Begad, it would be unpossible for me to tell you the state the whole meetin' was in when they seen this. Some were hoarse wid laughin'; some turned up their eyes wid wondher; many thought them mad, an' others thought they had turned up their little fingers a thrifle too often.

"'Be goxty, it's a burnin' shame,' said one, 'to see three black-mouth clargy in sich a state at this early hour!' 'Thundher an' ounze, what's over them at all?' says others; 'why, one would think they're bewitched. Holy Moses, look at the caper the Methodist cuts! An' as for the Recthor, who would think he could handle his feet at sich a rate! Be this an' be that, he cuts the buckle, and does the threblin' step aiquil to Paddy Horaghan, the dancin'-masther himself! An' see! Bad cess to the morsel of the parson that's not hard at *Pease upon a trencher*, an' it of a Sunday too! Whirroo, gintle-

men, the fun's in yez afther all—whish! more power to yez!'

"The sorra's own fun they had, an' no wondher; but judge of what they felt, when all at once they saw ould Jack Rafferty himself bouncin' in among them, and footing it away like the best o' them. Bedad, no play could come up to it, an' nothin' could be heard but laughin', shouts of encouragement, and clappin' of hands like mad. Now the minute Jack Rafferty left the chair where he had been carvin' the pudden, ould Harry Connolly comes over and claps himself down in his place, in ordher to send it round, of coorse; an' he was scarcely sated, when who should make his appearance but Barney Hartigan, the piper. Barney, by the way, had been sent for early in the day, but bein' from home when the message for him went, he couldn't come any sooner.

"'Begorra,' said Barney, 'you're airly at the work, gintlemen! but what does this mane? But, divle may care, yez shan't want the music while there's a blast in the pipes, anyhow!' So sayin', he gave them Jig Polthogue, an' after that Kiss my Lady, in his best style.

"In the manetime the fun went on thick an' threefold, for it must be remimbered that Harry, the ould knave, was at the pudden; an' maybe he didn't sarve it about in double quick time too. The first he helped was the bride, and, before you could say chopstick, she was at it hard an' fast before the Methodist praicher. Harry liked this, and made up his mind soon to find partners for the rest; so he accordianly sent the pudden about like lightnin'; an' to make a long story short, barrin' the piper an' himself, there wasn't a pair o' heels in the house but was as busy at the dancin' as if their lives depinded on it.

"'Barney,' says Harry, 'jist taste a morsel o' this pudden, divle the such a bully of a pudden ever you ett; here, your sowl! thry a snig of it—it's beautiful.'

"'To be sure I will,' says Barney, 'I'm not the boy to refuse a good thing; but, Harry, be quick, for you know my hands is engaged; an' it would be a thousand

pities not to keep them in music, an' they so well inclined. Thank you, Harry; begad, that is a famous pudden; but blood an' turnips, what's this for?'

"The word was scarcely out of his mouth when he bounced up, pipes an' all, an' dashed into the middle of the party. 'Hurroo, your sowls, let us make a night of it! The Ballyboulteen boys forever! Go it, your reverence—turn your partner—heel an' toe, ministher. Good! Well done again.—Whish! Hurroo! Here's for Ballyboulteen, an' the sky over it!'

"Bad luck to the sich a set ever was seen together in this world, or will again, I suppose. The worst, however, wasn't come yet, for jist as they were in the very heat an' fury of the dance, what do you think comes hoppin' in among them but another pudden, as nimble an 'merry as the first! That was enough; they all had heard of—the ministhers among the rest—an' most o' them had seen the other pudden, and knew that there must be a fairy in it, sure enough. Well, as I said, in it comes to the thick o' them; but the very appearance of it was enough. Off the three clargy danced, and off the whole weddiners danced afther them, every one makin' the best of their way home; but not a sowl of them able to break out of the step, if they were to be hanged for it. Throth it wouldn't lave a laugh in you to see the parson dancin' down the road on his way home, and the ministher and Methodist praicher cuttin' the buckle as they went along in the opposite direction. To make short work of it, they all danced home at last, wid scarce a puff of wind in them; the bride and bridegroom danced away to bed; an' now, boys, come an' let us dance the *Horo Lheig* in the barn 'idout. But you see, boys, before we go, an' in ordher that I may make everything plain, I had as good tell you, that Harry, in crossing the bridge of Ballyboulteen, a couple of miles below Squire Bragshaw's demense wall, saw the pudden floatin' down the river—the truth is he was waitin' for it; but be this as it may, he took it out, for the wather had made it as clane as a new pin, and tuckin' it up in the tail of his big coat, contrived, as you all

guess, I suppose, to change it while Paddy Scanlan an' the wife were examinin' the sky; an' for the other, he contrived to bewitch it in the same manner, by gettin' a fairy to go into it, for, indeed, it was purty well known that the same Harry was hand an' glove wid the *good people.* Others will tell you that it was half a pound of quicksilver he put into it; but that doesn't stand to raison. At any rate, boys, I have tould you the adventures of the Mad Pudden of Ballyboulteen; but I don't wish to tell you many other things about it that happened—*for fraid I'd tell a lie.*" *

* This superstition of the dancing or bewitched pudding has not, so far as I have been able to ascertain, ever been given to the public before. The singular tendency to saltation is attributed to two causes, both of which are introduced in the tale. Some will insist that a fairy-man or fairy-woman has the power to bewitch a pudding by putting a fairy into it; whilst others maintain that a competent portion of quicksilver will make it dance over half the parish.

It is true that all over the world the girl with a dowry stands a better chance of marriage than her penniless sister; but it remains to be seen whether with age and that denser population which makes the struggle for life more desperate, marriage will become in America the sordid business arrangement that it is in most European countries. Pretty Suzanne, in this story by Jean Baraney (translated for ROMANCE by "Kham"), would hardly have had to buy her statuette, if she had been born in America.

ST. LIEU.

MOTHER AUVRAINS, or Madame Suzanne as she was commonly called, dwelt in the farm-house of the Buisses, situated at one end of the village of Presselles. It was a pretty farm-cottage, neat and attractive, carpeted over with a thick vine, all leafy in summer, all bleached in winter, whose tiled roof, bathed in sunshine or capped with frost, attracted every passing eye by its lofty wind-vane, on which was perched a cock.

Mother Auvrains is a petite old lady, whose bright eyes, yet strong in spite of the lapse of time, light up her wrinkled face with an eternal smile. Her wrinkles are like a flower pressed between the leaves of a book; for she is pretty, and under her silvered locks preserves a delicate complexion almost rosy, recalling the last eglantine touched by the winter breeze.

Clad in a skirt of drugget or cretonne according to the season, a short jacket and a bib apron, she accomplishes as much work as her husband, for if from dawn until night he is busy in the field, she does the cooking, cares for the poultry, attends to the washing, and does the family mending, with no other aid than that of a charity girl of thirteen years.

These two good old people adore each other still, and during the forty years of their married life it has not once occurred to Madame Suzanne to think of any other man than her husband, nor to Pierre Auvrains to admire any other woman than his wife. The school-

master used to compare them to Philemon and Baucis. And during these forty years they have given asylum to a statuette of St. Lieu.

The saint is installed in a conspicuous place over the immense mantel-piece of the low-studded room in a sort of nook dug out in the bricks expressly for it. This statuette of colored plaster has no quality to charm the eye. It is rudely moulded, its features are as begrimed as the rafters of the ceiling, and of the two arms once raised to Heaven in an attitude of invocation, the left alone remains. This one seems to gesticulate with more anger than supplication. Never mind; such as it was, Mother Auvrains would not give it up for any price that might be offered; and I am going to tell you why.

At the age of eighteen, Suzanne Lanerson was indeed a most beautiful creature.

The envious whispered that she was red-haired, but they lied, for her fine, soft and wavy tresses crowned her fair forehead with an aureole of pale gold. With her dazzling complexion, her eyes blue as the sky, her pretty little mouth, her supple shape, she caused all whom she passed to turn about, and yet she seemed not to notice it. She had no mother; her father was a sabot-maker; and she gave her days to millinery, dress-making and mending. Small were their savings, for girls' wages were scanty in the villages, and the trembling hands of the old father were no longer able to put aside the smallest surplus.

As they were known to be poor, nobody dreamed of marrying Suzanne. The mayor's son, the wheelwright's son, and other village beaux made eyes at her—a pure waste of time, however, for she was as discreet as handsome. All her comrades, even the homeliest of them, sad to say, married under her nose, with joy inexpressible at seeing her well started on the way to be an old maid. At first she bore her sorrow patiently. A little sooner or a little later, she thought, and her turn to marry would come; and when they called her hither and thither to fit or sew on a wedding dress, she did it with good

heart, with no after-thought, and with the same smile upon her rosy lips. Meanwhile, the years rolled on, and the time came when Suzanne Lanerson saw with terror her festival of St. Catherine drawing near.

The gossips, who took a deep interest in her, counselled her to address herself to St. Lieu, and to pray with confidence.

"He will find you a husband," said they. "Do you not know that he is the patron of the betrothed and the married, and, to say the least, is as powerful in Heaven as St. Catherine? Indeed, he gains far more victories than she."

At first, she would not believe, but by the importunities of her friends she was induced to invest in a statuette of the saint, who is held in high veneration in Presselles. She carried it to her chamber, and set it up outside the window, to the right, as people hang barometers.

Do not think this was from irreverence. By no means. She chose this nook because the window was garlanded with wistaria, laden with violet clusters. In her opinion, the good saint ought to find himself very comfortable on the little wooden shelf which the sabot-maker had cut out for him, amid the freshness of the leaves and the perfume of the flowers, with the chattering birds under the eaves above sending down their songs to him with the dawn.

She fervently besought the saint each morning, but he who was so easily made tender-hearted (the gossips said) was stubborn to the voice from this pretty mouth and the prayer of this innocent soul.

Time slipped away; the swallows abandoned the village church-tower, and the groves of oak took on a tint of ruddy gold. Around the cottage the leaves came out in autumn dress, the wistaria clusters grew languid on their stems, then dropped and the wind swept them away like swarms of butterflies.

October was near its close. If on the 25th of the following month Suzanne Lanerson was not married, she would braid the crown of St. Catherine.

Well, there was nothing but to wait for it, since not a youth dreamed of demanding that slender hand, knowing it would not bring him a penny of dowry.

How her companions would laugh at her hereafter, rally her upon her credulity in regard to St. Lieu, and give her the title of old maid! She was so profoundly discouraged that she had not force enough to pray to the saint. Faith deserted her heart, as the swallows had fled from their nests, driven by the cold.

One November morning, when there was no sunshine in the sky, she pulled aside the bare wistaria branches, and took out the statuette with an angry movement poorly restrained. Her hand trembled so violently that the little statuette slipped from her grasp and shot out into space.

Suzanne was frightened. She seemed to herself to have committed an act of sacrilege. Quivering with emotion and with her heart giving tumultuous bounds, she hastened down the stairway in search of poor St. Lieu, who must certainly have been shivered into fragments by his fall. What was her surprise at finding below, in the shop where her father shaped his sabots, a stranger, who, standing near the good man, was holding out to him the statuette, from which by some miracle only an arm was missing.

"I do not know who threw this upon my head," he remarked, "but I beg to extend my compliments to the person."

A slight stream of blood was trickling from his forehead across his cheek. Suzanne, more and more agitated, humbly confessed, sued for pardon, and brought some water to remove the blood, the sight of which distressed her.

The unknown smiled and granted pardon, on the condition that she herself should perform the dressing. She obeyed, trembling even more than before. It was soon accomplished; too soon indeed to please the wounded man. He looked at Suzanne, and Suzanne looked at him. He said to himself how beautiful she was, with the genuine emotion which he read in her

blue eyes; and he could not tire of contemplating her delicate complexion and her rebellious blonde tresses.

She thought certainly there was no such handsome young man as he at Presselles. He appeared about thirty years of age, and his intelligent and honest eyes made her tremble,—she knew not why—when they fixed themselves upon hers; for he did not depart at once after the dressing of his wound.

He sat down to rest an instant, and recounted how he had come from Sange to Buisses to negotiate with the farmer, who wished to sell his farm. If they agreed upon the terms, it was he who would replace the present tenant. Suzanne thought in the bottom of her heart that they would not lose by the change, and that she should take far greater pleasure in meeting the new farmer than she had in the jovial face and rubicund nose of good man Sylvain.

Pierre Auvrains felt also very happy at having in prospect such a pretty neighbor. He said so to Suzanne aside, father Lanerson having fallen to work again upon his sabots.

The cottage of the sabot-maker is sad to-day; the shutters are closed, the roof buried in snow. In revenge, the farm at Buisses is in festival. Rejoicing in the great hall, laughter, song, while the blaze from the great hearth-stone reflects gaily upon the glazing of the window, like the changing gleams on the stained windows of the church.

To-day Suzanne Lanerson has espoused Pierre Autvrains, he whose forehead St. Lieu wounded when he slipped from the hand of the young woman. And to think that she lost confidence in the good saint! He could not be more gloriously exonerated than now.

This is why the statuette is piously preserved in a sort of niche above the immense chimney-piece.

And why, though it is one-armed, and black as the rafters in the kitchen-ceiling, and very homely at best, Mother Auvrains, ever grateful, would not part with it for anything you could offer.

No city in northern Europe is more celebrated in story than "quaint, embattled Edinburgh." Mr. William Leighton has compiled a volume of "Mysterious Legends of Edinburgh "(published by John Grant), and from this the following story is taken. It is essentially Scotch in all of its features, the strong religious bent of that sturdy race cropping out liberally during its course, with plenty of the proverbial Scotch shrewdness and humor.

THE DEACON'S DISAPPEARANCE.

MANY years ago, when I first came to Edinburgh, and was attending the university, I became acquainted with the family of Mr. Duncan Macgillivray, who lived in Borthwick's Close. He occupied the dignified position in those days of a deacon, his craft being that of the hammermen, and therefore may be supposed to have been pretty well to do in the world,—a fact of some importance to me, who was steeped in the blessings of a ten-pound bursary, supplemented by an occasional bag of meal and a junket of salt beef, not the very best kind of food for the muses, then worshipped by me. So it was that I had a great love for Mrs. Macgillivray's tea table, and by consequence, a respect for the mistress herself.

One afternoon, when I resorted to my old haunt, expecting to find the hearth gods all in good humor as usual, I was surprised to meet Mrs. Macgillivray in the lobby, with a face wherefrom the accustomed smile was totally banished, and its place occupied by pale fear.

"What has happened?" inquired I, as I took her trembling hand.

"Oh, have you not heard?" replied she.

"Nothing," added I with increased apprehension.

"I have neither seen nor heard o' the deacon since yesterday morning after breakfast," was the announcement.

"A mere case of absence," said I, with an effort at cheerfulness; "it is not a case of missing."

"Ye may gie it ony name ye please," said she, "but the like has never happened since the day o' our marriage, and ye know that the deacon was aye punctual, aye to a very minute."

I was forced to admit that that was true, yet I could see no great reason for fear, and proceeding with her to the parlor, I took a seat alongside of her with a view to get some further information. I saw that as a friend of the family I had something to do, and my first effort was to procure all the information she could give me, preparatory to my undertaking a search for so important a personage as the deacon of the hammermen of Edinburgh. There was, however, wonderfully little to be got. She could tell me of no reason for his absence; there was no journey he had intended to undertake; he had no habits of intemperance which might have laid him up in a tavern; nor any loose inclinations that could have wiled him into any of the dens of the dissolute; neither, so far as she could say, had he any money upon him, to tempt the robber and the murderer. Then, inquiries had already been made in almost every quarter where he was known to frequent, so that if I had started upon the instant, I might have found it difficult to know in what direction to turn myself; our conversation was getting exhausted, as every suggestion fell away, leaving only an addition to the prevailing gloom, when I started, more by chance than good guidance, the question whether the deacon had any enemies.

To this I got an answer which surprised me; for of all the men in the world, the deacon might have been supposed to possess an immunity from the incursions of revenge.

"I had forgotten," said she, as she seemed to revert to some idea which startled her; "yes, there is one man I fear; strange I never thought of it till ye put the question; yes, his own brother, o' the same blood, born of the same mother—Angus Macgillivray, flesher in the Fleshmarket Close; that man has been the very curse

o' our family; he was a sweetheart o' mine before I got acquainted with the deacon, but I never liked him so that I could have married him, or rather I aye feared him for his passions, let alone his trade o' killing lambs; he never forgave our marriage, and I'm no sure if he didna hate me as much as he did his brother; he never came to see us, though the deacon often invited him, prayed him to let byganes be byganes, nor even after he married a wife o' his ain did he forget and forgive, just as if he felt dissatisfied that he hadna got some revenge; and then to make things waur, the deacon got rich as he got poor, a change that never could be forgiven; so things went on for years, nae reconciliation, but as their ways lay different and they seldom met, there were few opportunities for quarrels. Now a' thae things come up upon me; and mair, for it is only six months syne that Angus, having met the deacon in a tavern, got into wrath, and made threats which forced the deacon to swear a lawborrows against him."

These words, uttered in the peculiar tone of grief and fear, made an impression upon me which I tried to conceal, and it was aggravated by that involuntary action of the nerves which doctors call "working up," an effect consequent upon a process of reasoning where all the ideas are led by the feelings. I sat for some time without speaking, for I felt that it would have made matters worse to admit what I thought, and an effort to cheer does not do much good unless it is backed by some indisputable fact of a favorable kind. I did not even know what to suggest in aid of further inquiry, but I endeavored to ascertain whether any one had called at Angus's flesh-booth, to know whether he was at home, and having got something like a negative from her, I resolved within my own mind to find out what I could in this direction.

I accordingly left her with some words calculated to assure her, and bending my steps to the Fleshmarket, I met several friends of the well-known deacon, all of whom had heard of his unaccountable disappearance without being able to suggest any mode of accounting

for him. On arriving at the market, I made at once for Angus Macgillivray's booth. He was not there, and a boy who served the customers answered to my inquiry that he had not seen his master since the morning of the previous day. I got accordingly from the boy the place of his master's residence, and though in the chance of finding him there I might have hesitated as to the propriety of a direct call, what I resolved was to see his wife in his (by me) supposed absence. Angus, I found, lived at the corner of the turn which the Cowgate makes into the Grassmarket, and thither I bent my steps; nor was it many minutes before I was in the presence of Mrs. Angus Macgillivray; but what was my wonderment to find this woman in very much the same condition as that in which I found the wife of the deacon. Her husband had left the house the previous day after breakfast without saying a word that he was to be otherwise engaged than at his stall; and as it was his invariable habit to tell her when he was to go to the country (which he often did) for cattle, she could not account for his absence in any way. So far there was a difference between the conditions of the sisters-in-law, that Mrs. Angus Macgillivray did not entertain any apprehension that any violence had overtaken her husband, yet it was clear enough, even from the suspicious eye she cast upon me while making the inquiries, that she was not free from the fear of some untoward accident. She even questioned me as to my motive for calling, as if she thought I had something to tell, and was afraid to tell it; and I had some difficulty in satisfying her that my object was not in any way connected with the circumstances of his disappearance. At all hazards, it was my especial care to avoid any reference to the deacon, and especially *his* absence; for as she doubtless knew that the enmity was all on one side, that of her husband, she might have drawn, with very different feelings, the same conclusion to which her sister-in-law had arrived.

Having left this woman also in a very unhappy condition, I stepped up to the bailies' office and inquired

there whether any search had been made by any of the officers or constables; but here again I was met by the remark that a day-and-a-half's absence did not form even a ground for such a fear of any occurrence, either disastrous or fatal, as would authorize any search by the authorities of the city. I had my reason for a different conclusion, but I was necessarily restrained from telling my story by a fear of throwing suspicion upon a man vindictive enough to take revenge upon me.

On going toward Borthwick's Close, with the intention of again seeing the deaconess—for so these great dignitaries were sometimes called at that time when corporations were a species of dominions or powers—I met Andrew Girvan, her brother, a currier, who lived in Niddry's Wynd. A sensible man, not prone to fancies, he took a very different view.

"I have been everywhere I could think of," said he, "but I can find no trace."

"Everywhere but the house of his brother," said I, fixing my eyes on him.

"The house of his brother!" rejoined he; "what on earth would take me there—the place of all others he would avoid?"

"Very true; but what would you think were you to find that Angus is also missing, having left his house about the same time?" said I, with a view to sound him, and thereby test my own suspicions.

"Think!" replied he, "why, was not I present at Glennie's tavern that night when the villain drew his knife against his own brother, and I hurried the deacon away; and was it not I who recommended the lawborrows? Think! Why, if I were to find it true that Angus Macgillivray was away, I would conclude at the instant that he had repaid the lawborrows by a secret stab."

"Yes; but there are difficulties," said I, with that straining for evidence of a conviction which is so natural to us. "Where could such a stab have been given in broad day? and it must have been in the forenoon, seeing the deacon did not come home to dinner. Then

any secret den or out-of-the-way place is scarcely to be thought of, insomuch as the deacon could not have been wiled there by one whom he feared."

"Nothing in all that," replied he; "for we all know that the deacon's business led him down dark closes and out-of-the-way places, where there are dens for all customers, dead or alive. And besides, he was so simple and generous a man, that if Angus had met him and proffered the open hand of reconciliation, he might have led him anywhere."

"Well," said I, getting more confident, "I may tell you, as his brother-in-law, that I have ascertained from Angus's wife herself that he too has been missing for the same time."

"Then by all that is good," cried he, as his eye flashed, from the suddenness of the impression upon the ear of these words, "the mystery is all but cleared up. The villain has murdered his own brother, and run to the country."

Nor was I much astonished at this ejaculation, for the original suspicion had gradually been becoming a conviction with me, and my mind was almost eager to have any remaining doubts removed.

"But," said I, "what is to be done?"

"Go to the city authorities," replied he on the instant, "and get them to issue a warrant for the apprehension of Angus Macgillivray."

"I have been at the bailies' office," said I, "and found that the officers there do not consider the affair as sufficiently alarming to induce even an official search."

"Because," replied he, "they don't know the facts," adding satirically, "It is generally believed that those who are blind don't see."

"But even if they were put in possession of the facts, no warrant would be issued without a signed information; and would you take that responsibility?" was my question.

"No," replied he; "but you might, because you have made the proper inquiry, and found Angus fled."

"I would not like to take that responsibility either,"

rejoined I. "Besides, the time is not far enough gone for any very serious apprehension. We must wait another day. There is an old saying something to the effect, 'that if you want to keep your friends, don't prolong your visit beyond three days; and if you want to be thought not dead, don't be unaccountably absent from home beyond three nights.'"

To this Mr. Girvan agreed, and both of us saw the propriety of visiting the deaconess, who was hour by hour losing hope. We found her in the same position in which I had left her. I noticed that as we entered, she turned a wistful eye upon us, with an expression that seemed to speak and say, Is he not with you? and there followed that blank look in which the orb seems dead. There was silence everywhere, as if Angerona had there set up her temple, and the votaries were mute. The children, ignorant of the cause of change in their mother, had been put to bed. The servant whom we saw as we passed the kitchen sat at the fireside hanging her head, as if she mourned the death of a kind master, and no neighbors dared to intrude where they could carry no comfort—a species of kindness this in the people of Scotland which results from a delicacy they get small credit for from those who judge from a rude speech and homely, if not coarse, manners. We sat down quietly and gravely—a clear enough indication to her that we brought no hopeful intelligence; nor had we sat many minutes when we came to understand what was the direction of the current of her thoughts. They had been all running toward the conclusion that Angus Macgillivray was in some way connected with the mysterious affair.

"Have ye inquired," she asked, as she cast her eye over us, "if Angus has been at hame syn yesterday? I could wad my marriage ring he's awa, and nae suner than he should be. Will ye no answer?" she continued, in a wailing way. "Is he in Edinburgh? When was he seen? Can naebody tell?"

I looked to Girvan—for I could not answer without falsehood—and he understood me.

"I have made no inquiry, Margaret," said he; "nor did I think it necessary to go there—the suspicion seems so unnatural, so unlikely. Besides, are you not taking on too heavily? This is only the second day."

"The second day!" she burst forth. "And Deacon Macgillivray hasna seen his wife or his bairns, nor sent a letter or a message to tell whaur he is. The second day!" she continued in the same wailing strain. "When was it that he was half-an-hour behind his dinner? And this has taken place in Edinburgh, which is just a lang street, whaur everybody kens everything about everybody."

"Many a longer absence has had a happy explanation," replied her brother. "We have only as yet one fact, and it will just look as you view it. You know peats will build the side of a house as well as make a fire that will burn you."

"But there's nae use buttering peats," cried she impatiently. "I tell you Deacon Macgillivray is dead, and Angus is the man who has made me a widow, and my bairns fatherless."

And then came a fit of hysterical sobbing, which we had no means of alleviating. While I looked at her, and of course pitied her, I could not help thinking how completely her suspicion was confirmed by the information I had got, and which I dared not communicate to her. There was enough of sorrow for the hour. And as we saw we could be of no further service that night, we left her to that kind of consolation which the heart seeks for itself, and sometimes the more readily and successfully that it is left to itself and to Him who is master of the heart and the issues thereof.

Next forenoon I repaired to Girvan's, as arranged between us, in order that together we might make a more thorough search to the effect at least of ascertaining whether the missing man had been seen, and when and where, during the forenoon of his disappearance. On going along I found that the affair had spread, insomuch, indeed, that the question, "What has become of Deacon Macgillivray?" belonged now to the public.

There was only one solitary grain of news. It appeared that a person of the name of Peter M'Glashan, a laborer, who resided in the Cowgate, and whom we saw and interrogated, had been the involuntary cause of some of the theories, but all that could be extracted from him amounted to this, that he had seen Deacon Macgillivray that forenoon hurrying up the High Street, and that, having occasion to return, he had met, about ten minutes after, Angus Macgillivray coming up the Bow, the top of which he doubled as if he were going down the High Street; one or two others spoke to having seen the brothers respectively on the same route.

It was with minds very ill prepared for a meeting with the deaconess that we betook ourselves about eight o'clock in the evening to Borthwick's Close. We found the same house of gloom, with the shadows increased in the darkness of these hours, and all appearances betokening utter hopelessness. The hours passed without any better reckoning than the increasing silence in the street, and the gathering gloom of the unsnuffed candle, till it might be about eleven, when a slight knock was heard at the door.

Mrs. Macgillivray started, and we were not less surprised; nay, I have no doubt that all of us had some notion that the visitor might be no other than the deacon himself; the door was opened by the servant, we listened to the step on the passage—tramp—tramp—so like one well known, that Girvan ejaculated with a kind of spasm, "It's the deacon!" The words were electric; we started up, and even Mrs. Macgillivray sat upright gazing at the door; it opened, and before us stood one of the town officers with the red neck on his blue coat.

"Here is a bit of paper," said he, "which was brought up to the office about an hour ago."

And Girvan, taking it out of his hand, fixed his eyes upon it as if he were charmed, yet he did not seem to comprehend what he was reading; for although I asked him what it contained, he could not utter a word. Mrs. Macgillivray's eye was fixed upon him; and I myself sat with open mouth, wondering what ailed the man.

"Can ye no read?" said the officer.

"Read," added I, impatiently.

And the same words trembled on the lips of the deaconess.

Out it came at length; and the effect was certainly proportioned to the cause. I took the paper out of his hand, and read for myself the following words, disposed in lines in this manner—

"Deacon Macgillivray,
Borthwick's Close, Edinburgh,
Killed on the 19th."

The paper was much crumpled, as if it had met with rough usage; and what added to the effect of the direful words, it was besmeared with blood to such an extent that some of the letters were scarcely legible. I would willingly have kept it from the eyes of the deaconess, but she held out her hand tremblingly to get possession of it, and it was too late to attempt concealment. She read it at a glance; and, as if it had been on fire, threw it from her, unable to utter a word.

"Stay a little," said Girvan, as he rose and took his hat. "I will be back in ten minutes."

He hurriedly left the room. And I, taking up the paper, began to question the officer as to the person who left it at the bailies' office. I ascertained that his name was Hugh M'Pherson, a cobbler, who resided in the Cowgate; and that his account of the manner of obtaining it was, that he found it among some straw on the street right opposite the coach-office in the High Street, from which the coach to Galashiels started twice a week. It was further stated by M'Pherson that his opinion was that the paper had fallen from the coach, along with the straw among which it was found.

Before I had time to form any opinion as to the real purport and meaning of this sibylline scrap, Girvan came again hurriedly into the room, breathing hard, as if he had been running—an effect, no doubt, due more to his excitement than to his bodily exertion. Laying down his hat, he resumed his seat, and putting his hand

into his pocket, he drew out another paper something like an account.

"Look at that," said he, as he handed it to me.

Glancing over it, I found it to be an account for skins, due by Girvan to Angus Magillivray, duly discharged.

"What of this?" said I, utterly at a loss to know the meaning of it all.

"Examine the handwriting of the two papers," said he.

I did so, and immediately ejaculated, "Why, that blood-stained scrap is written by Angus Macgillivray."

"No doubt of it," said Girvan. "I knew it the moment I saw it, but I wanted to make sure work."

"And sure enough it is," replied I; "but what conclusion do you draw from it?"

"I am afraid to mention it," was the reply.

"But I'm no," cried the deaconess in a wild way. "It is just as I thought," she continued, as she moved her arms as if to enable her to utter the words, "Angus Macgillivray has murdered my husband."

"But why should he publish the act in his own handwriting?" I rejoined.

"Because the awfu' man glories in his revenge," she cried again hysterically.

"That hardly squares with human nature," said Girvan.

To this I assented, adding that "Angus was not so mad as not only to write his own condemnation, but give the officers of the law a direction to go in pursuit of him."

With all these qualifications, it was impossible to get rid of the direct effect of the words of the paper clearly enough indicating that the deacon had been killed by some one, whether Angus or not. The officer himself seemed to have no doubt; and as for Mrs. Macgillivray, her former conclusion was only rendered more certain, and the calmness into which she quickly relapsed appeared to be the consequence of resignation to the will of God.

Meanwhile, the officer had intimated that the paper was to be preserved and taken up to the office in the morning, with any explanation that could be given of it. He then went away; and late as the hour was, we resolved upon seeking out M'Pherson, to ascertain from his own mouth the true circumstances connected with the finding of the extraordinary paper. We accordingly went to the Cowgate, and having found the man, who was on the eve of going to bed, proceeded with our examination. He adhered strictly to what he had stated in the bailies' office, nor had he any more to communicate; but we derived thus much from our visit, that we became satisfied the man was honest, and was not accessory to any trick or deception whereby some one might have been supposed to have taken advantage of the public fermentation to infuse a new interest into what was already sufficiently engrossing. Girvan took the paper home with him; and we parted with the hope of getting some more light next day.

The light certainly did not come; but there was now more official inquiry as well as energy. Girvan, at an early hour of the forenoon, took the blood-stained paper to the bailies' office, and found that the assessor was so much impressed with the strangeness of the whole story, that he had resolved upon handing it over to the fiscal. Nor did he fail in this, as soon appeared by a wall-bill which, about one o'clock, glared in various parts of the city, to the effect that, whereas, a paper, on which was written the following words (quoted), had been found on the High Street of Edinburgh, a reward of £5 would be given to the person who had written the contents of the said paper (assuming it doubtful whether Angus Macgillivray was the man) if he would come forward and give testimony as to the object or meaning thereof; or to any person who would give information tending to show where the person of Duncan Macgillivray, deacon of the hammermen, could be found, whether dead or alive. Nor did the fiscal limit his official duties by this proclamation; for about two o'clock he commenced a recognition of all parties who

knew anything regarding the affair, among whom were the deaconess (who was, in consequence of her weakness, taken to the office in a sedan chair), Mrs. Angus Macgillivray, M'Pherson, Girvan, myself, and the individuals who had seen the missing men on the day of their disappearance.

But nothing came out of the bill or the precognitions tending toward any theory sufficient to stay the mind, or induce belief, if we except a statement made by a young man, a clerk in the coach-office, opposite which the blood-stained paper had been found. He went forward in the afternoon, and was precognosced by the fiscal, to the effect that on the day of the disappearance he saw two men, whom he did not know, mount the coach just when it began to move, and without having time to pay their fares, which they probably calculated upon settling at the other end of their journey. One of the men, who was stouter and fatter than the other, got inside, and the other, immediately upon perceiving the movement, sprang up behind. He observed no concert between the two, yet he felt satisfied that the one had resolved to go after he saw the other about to take his seat. It was only after he heard a description of the two Macgillivrays that he began to think they were the men whom he had observed. When this story came to be known, it was conveniently found to agree in some respects with the history of the paper. Assuming that the men seen by the clerk were really the two brothers, it seemed probable that the deacon was he who went inside, probably called upon to undertake the journey on short notice by some business emergency, and that Angus, who was prowling about, had seen his brother in the act of entering the coach, had suddenly formed a resolution to dog him into the country, and there wreak his revenge at a distance from Edinburgh. This sudden purpose seemed probable, because if there had been any concert between the two to travel together, Angus would have gone inside also, where, according to the clerk's statement, there was plenty of room for him. So far ingenious, and cer-

tainly in the circumstances not improbable. Then as to the paper, what more likely than that it should have come with the returned coach, having been sent by Angus when upon the eve of flight after committing the deed, and bearing the marks of bloody fingers? As for the motive for thus proclaiming his villany, the most difficult element in the whole story, it might have been (what might not be when the mind is predisposed to find that it *is?*) the wild act of a bravado, glorying, as Mrs. Macgillivray herself expressed it, in his revenge at a time when he knew he would be far away before the paper reached its destination.

Another day dawned, bringing with it of course further confirmation, in the mere passage of time, of the universal conviction that, whatever might be the speculations as to the when, how, or wherefore, there could be little doubt of the fate of Deacon Macgillivray. And with the same increase of effect the day passed. Taking Girvan along with me, I called at the house in Borthwick's Close about five o'clock. We found there Mrs. Girvan, and another, of all in the world the most unexpected, the wife of Angus Macgillivray herself. Her story was extraordinary enough. She said that, ever since the taking out of the lawborrows, Angus Macgillivray had been a changed man. He read his Bible in the morning, and showed other indications of penitence for the enmity he had entertained toward his brother. "And now," continued the woman, as she took from her pocket a Bible, which she had probably brought with her for the very purpose; "I swear by this holy book, which I hope to be the means of the salvation of my soul and that of my husband, that Angus Macgillivray, on that morning when he so strangely disappeared, stated to me, ay, with tears in his eyes, that he mourned continually over the separation of himself and his brother; that he was determined to throw himself in his way, to confess his contrition and sorrow for what had passed, to offer him his hand, and swear a renewed friendship, which he would keep true to the day of his death."

This remarkable statement, which was confirmed by the manner as well as the honest character of the woman, was, I think, believed by all of us excepting the deaconess, who had been so completely wedded to the old theory of the murder by Angus that it seemed as impossible to move her from this conviction as it was to raise her out of the great depth of her sorrows.

"The news has been lang o' coming, woman," said she, "I will believe it when Angus proves himsel' to be innocent o' a brother's bluid."

"But you forget, sister," said the other, "that I have nothing to expect from coming here and telling you a lie. I am here for your comfort; to satisfy you that, whatever has become of your husband, he has received no injury from the hands of mine."

"That looks like reason," said I; "and I think I now see some light breaking through all this darkness."

"Whaur?" ejaculated Mrs. Macgillivray. "There is nae light to me except the light of heaven. Nae earthly light will ever show me again the living face o' Duncan Macgillivray. He is dead—dead!"

"And I may say the same of my husband," said the brother's wife. "Is he not a-missing as well as Duncan? and who has a right to say that the one killed the other, or that other the one?"

I was struck with the reasoning of the woman, who was better educated than the deaconess, and with a greater power of penetration, and the mystery was about to take another turn. I was about to enlarge upon what had been last said, when Mrs. Girvan laid her hand on my arm and said, "Hush!" We had no notion of what she meant. Every one looked at her now. I saw plainly that she was busy listening.

"I hear Deacon Macgillivray's voice on the stair," she said.

And the words were scarcely spoken when a confused shuffling of footsteps was heard in the lobby. The door opened, and in there came the deacon and his brother Angus.

"What is the meaning o' a' this?" cried the cast-up

dignitary. "A dozen people have met me, and told me I have been dead and buried for five days."

"And that I murdered my ain brother," cried Angus.

"And surely I am dead," added the deacon, with a laugh, "for my ain wife is feared at me, and winna even offer me her hand. Peggy, woman," he continued, as he went round and took his wife in his arms, "what ails ye?"

During all which the deaconess was in a vertigo, with nothing in her brain fixed except the image of her husband, received through a pair of staring eyes.

"And Johnny Gow didna tell you?" continued he, as he looked round upon us all still in amazement.

"No," responded the wife, as she began to recover herself. "What had he to tell?"

"Just that Angus and I had gane down to Blackha' to see our brother Andrew," said he; "but I see now how it is. Johnny was half drunk when I gave him the message, and the sixpence had helped to mair drink, and the drink had driven him stupid."

"Why, deacon," said I, "it has been a serious affair. The whole city has been in the belief that you were murdered, and Angus was suspected of the deed. Nor is it to be wondered at, for even yet we want explanations."

"Explanations!" replied the deacon. "What mair do ye need than just that as I was going up the High Street I met Angus, who came up to me and said that he was a changed man, that he wanted the past to be forgotten, and that he would give the world to be friends wi' me. I couldna refuse the offered hand of a brother; and, after a', I was as anxious to be friends again as he. So maybe our hearts got big, and there might have been something in baith our een that belangs mair to women than men. When we were in this saft mood, the coach for Galashiels was on the very point of starting, and Angus said that he had intended to go to Blackha' to buy sheep the next forenoon, but that if I were agreeable, he would take his trip that day, and we might go together. I have no objections, said I,

but we maun send notice to our wives. I beckoned Gow, because I thought I could trust him, gave him a sixpence, and got a promise. Next moment we were on the coach, and by my troth I never enjoyed a jaunt better in my life. Andrew was delighted to see us friends again, and maybe there was a sowther o' kind that gaes mair to the heart than words. But what though the cadie deceived us, didna ye get," he continued, as he looked into the face of the deaconess, "*didna ye get the salmon that Angus sent you on the day it was killed, the* 19*th?*"

The secret was all but out. What was wanting was afterward ascertained. The driver had appropriated the fish because he saw no ticket of address upon it; the ticket was found by Hugh M'Pherson. And thus was explained a mystery which occupied the metropolis of Scotland nearly a week; in other words, which are less or more applicable to most mysteries, the worsted was rolled off—and, behold, the cork!

Molly Malloy is, perhaps, as great a contrast as can be presented to the typical calm, level-headed bonny maiden of Scotland. Her comical story was written for the *Home-Maker* by Elizabeth W. Champney.

MOLLY'S TWISTIFICATIONS.

"SURE, Molly's the most unfortunate craythur that iver you see," said Donal, "for misunderstandin' gintale conversayshun intirely. Sure, no matther what you're pleased to say, she'll take it in its literary sinse; like as whin, in spakin' of the great shower of rain we had, the praste said 'the windys of heaven were opened.' 'It's right your riverence is,' says Molly, 'for faith I heard the smashin' of one of the panes.' And if the stupid gurrl wasn't afther gazin' up into the skoi, to see if the windy had been shut!

"Molly's me cousin, sorr, as we make it out in Ireland, and very aisy reckonin' it is; for, in straight descint backward, me great-grandfeyther and Tim O'Gorman's great-grandmother were brothers, and Tim's wife's grandmother and Molly's stepmother's feyther's uncle were sisters.

"So you see that whin Molly's feyther was transported and her mother died, me feyther couldn't let his own flesh and blood perish with hunger, and he took her in, and we were brought up like two twinses, in the same cradle. Well there was niver enough of anythin' in the shanty for two babies, and whin Molly had the sup of milk, I hollered with an empty stomach, and, whin I was covered up with the bed-quilt, she ran around to keep herself warm, which is my understandin' of how it happened that I got all the brains and she got all the good looks. There wasn't enough of ayther for the two of us. And sure it's a beauty Molly is intirely, with the purtiest rid cheeks and black hair that reaches down to the knees of her. And great rollin' eyes, soft and

gentle, and set wide apart in the honest face of her, like those of a little Kerry cow; eyes that always looked you straight in the face an yet niver seemed to see nothin'. She was niver sinsible that you were pokin' fun at her, and she hadn't a mimory long enough to remimber an onkoindness.

"She nursed me feyther when he died of the faver, and she cared for me poor bedrid mother, and kept me at school, and dug the pertaties, and did all the work there was to be done, till I was grown a man in size. Sorra a bit of thanks did she get for that same. For, by the same token, the more you give a bye the iddication of a gintleman, the more he'll look down on thim that slaved thimsilves to death to raise him; leastwise it was that way with me, sorr, and me pet name for Molly in thim days was, 'You blunderin' ignyramus of a grane cabbage-head!' And sure it would have angered a saint to have seen the stupid things that Molly did, all the time tryin' her very best to moind what I said, all through the thick-headedness of her understandin'.

"Well, one day I brought home a piece of mate, and it's not often we had the luxury of a beefsteak in thim days, and, by the same token, Molly had no more idea how she should cook it than if it was the dinner of an imperor. 'Put it on with a cabbage-head!' says I, 'and sure an illegant biled dinner we'll be afther makin'.' With that I took me hoe and went to work at the end of the lot. But, howly saints! when I came back hungry for me dinner, what did I see but the pig munchin' the beefsteak forninst the cottage, and Molly going about her wurruk singin' as merrily as a lark in the mornin'.

"'Why, Donal, dear,' says Molly, 'you said put it on a cabbage-head, and first I thought it was my own head yees was manin', for that is what you're always callin' me, and thin I thought it couldn't be that sure, and so I laid it on the biggest cabbage in the yard. It's thinkin' about things that muddles me up, and afther this, Donal, dear, I'll niver think about anythin',' and the tears riz

in her eyes as she spoke. 'And, oh! Donal, do yees think it will do the pig any harm?'

"Well, I was that mad I could have bate her, but a Malloy is always a gintleman, and niver bates a lady —savin' and exceptin' his lawful wedded wife. 'Molly, Molly,' says I, 'this is past all bearin'! Sure it's lavin' you I am, for his holiness the Pope couldn't live with you afther this,' says I.

"'Just as you plaze, Donal dear,' says Molly; 'but if you're goin' away, I'll go wid ye, for sure I couldn't live widout you.'

"I made her no answer, but just struck out across the fields, not rightly knowin' or carin' which way I wint; but happenin' to look round, I saw her followin' afther.

"'If you will be comin',' says I, 'draw the doore to behind you;' for I misthrusted that while she went back to shut the doore, I could get well out of sight of her. To do this the better, I made straight for a bit of boggy woods, and lapin' into the midst of it, I went crashin' me way through till, before I knew it, I was in the open bog, and a-sinkin' deeper with every plunge in the bad ground. This brought me to me sinses, and I tried to turn round and come back; but I was in a sort of quicksand, and the more I struggled, the more I sank, till I was up to me waistband in the cowld, clammy mud. I hollered and I bellered, without any likelihood of making mesilf heard in that lone place, and with the illegant prospect of having me mouth soon stopped with the mud; and I had about given mesilf up to me fate when I heard Molly callin', 'Donal, where are you, Donal?'

"'Here, Molly darlint,' says I; 'but look careful where you're steppin', and forgive me for all the evil things I've said of you, for it's dyin' I am.'

"'Whist! Donal, be aisy; I'll git you out,' says she.

"'Ye can't do it,' says I; 'for even if you should lay down a log for me to catch on to, I misthrust it wouldn't bear me up; what I need is a flat boat, and there's no time for the gettin' of that, for I'm sinkin' deeper ivery minute.'

"'By the same token, it's this that I've brought the doore for,' says she. With that she laid the doore of our cottage flat-wise on the bog, and I managed to crawl upon it and to get safe to sound land.

"'And how, in the name of all the saints, did you happen to have the doore wid ye?' says I, as she scraped the mud off me trousers. 'Why, Donal, dear,' says she, 'don't you mind how you towld me to *draw the doore too behind me?* Sure, I'd have been here the sooner but for the thrubble I had gettin' it off its hinges and tyin' the halter well around it and draggin' it afther me.'

"I was sinsible enough that it was Molly's blunderin' that had saved my life, and she looked so purty, with her cheeks a-flamin' and her eyes a-shinin', that I kissed her thin and there; and as I did so, I minded how she had said that she couldn't live widout me; and a new idee come into my head and nearly knocked me sinseless. I thought that Molly might be even more satisfacthory as a wife than as a cousin, and what a fool I had been not to have thought of it all these years. I was afraid to ask her right out would she marry me, knowin' how much it would surprise her, and misthrustin' that no one had iver axed her before. So I waited till we had eaten our pertaties that avenin', and as I was sittin' on the doore-sill smokin' my pipe and Molly was washin' the dishes, I says, careless-like:

"'Molly, did you iver think of bein' married?'

"'That same I have, Donal,' says she.

"'Well, what have yees thought about it?' says I.

"'I've about made up me moind,' says she, 'that it's married I'll be.'

"'What!' says I; 'yees don't say that yees already promised? Who is the gossoon?' says I; 'tell me, an' I'll break his head for him. How long has this been goin' on, ye desateful craythe r?'

"'Don't be angry, Donal, dear,' says Molly, 'but I've been thinkin' about it iver since yer mother died. Sure, it isn't dacent for me to be kapin' house for yees in this lone way.'

"'Whin are yees afther bein' married?' says I.

"'What do yees think of Christmas Day, Donal?' says she.

"'Make it Michaelmas,' says I, 'and maybe by that time I can scare up a wife mesilf, for it will be lonesome widout yees.'

"'Just as ye plaze, Donal, darlint,' says Molly, and we settled back again into the ould ways.

"But though I kept watch for him, niver a peep could I catch of Molly's young man, they were that sly, the craythers! and though I considered in me moind all the gurrls in Tipperary, there was not one of them that I wanted for a wife; and I had no money to go courtin' with, and whin I considered how hard it was to make me livin' with Molly, I wondered what should I do when she was gone.

"Those were sad days for Ireland, for, by the same token, what with the landlords livin' in London, away from the estates, and the agents carin' only how they could squeeze the rint out of the tinants, and turnin' thim as were behind out of their cottages and farms, to starve on the roads, no wonder the byes, with the discouragemint, got wild like, and did crazy things intirely. They made a society amongst thimsilves, 'Ribbon men' they called thimsilves, and they helped the poor people that were thrown out of their shanties, and they bothered the bad landlords. But I niver had any doin's with thim, for by one way or another I had always had the rint ready, though the pig wint for it one quarter, and sorra another bit of mate did we have that winter afther the steak that Molly put on the cabbage. No more had Molly a new dress or a bonnet, and she had denied herself the amusement of ivery wake that had been held in the parish, till her spirits were growin' as heavy as her understandin'.

"There was a fair at Cashel, and, one fine day, 'Molly,' says I, 'I'll take what eggs we have in me handkercher, an' I'll sell thim at the fair, an' bring you home a ribbon,' says I, and with the eggs in one hand, and me shillaly in the other, off thrudges I to the fair.

"Now, while I was gone, who should come to the

cottage but one of the byes, to get me to meet with thim the night at the crannach, to help thim with some of their diviltry.

"Now, they were not that sure of me that they could out with their business to once, so Murtagh began, in a roundabout way, and 'Whist! Molly,' says he, 'is Donal a "Ribbon Man?"' says he.

"'Not yit,' says Molly, thinkin' of the ribbon I had promised to bring her; 'but by the same token, he's thinkin' of bein' one when he comes back from the fair.'

"'That's good,' says Murtagh, 'and if it's sure you are that he's with the "Ribbon," tell him to meet with us at midnight in the skirts of Ballymoran Forest.'

"'I will that same,' says Molly, and to be sure that she shouldn't forgit, knowin' her talent for twistifyin' a message, they made her repeat it three times—'Midnight in the skirts of Ballymoran Forest.'

"Now, it's right you are in thinkin' that Molly made a mess of it intirely, but before I tell you the how and whyfore of that, you must know the luck that came to me on the way to the fair.

"I was thrudgin' along whistlin' to mesilf, when I heard a great rackit behind me, and whin I looked around, there was a gintleman's dog-cart a-runnin' away with his horse; and the gintleman himself a-runnin' afther, and, by great exartion, losin' a rod or two the minute. I planted mesilf in the middle of the road, and droppin' me eggs, I grabbed hould of the bridle, and hild on to the baste till he tired of draggin' me, and the gintleman come up pantin' and blowin'.

"The horse it quieted down afther a bit, and prisently the gintleman's footman came up, a rubbin' of his showlder, which had been hurt with bein' tumbled in a ditch. 'Ye'd better go back to the hall, Terry,' says the gintleman, 'an' have the docther look at your showlder,' says he; 'I'll drive on to the fair, if this honest lad will get up beside me, and hould the horse when I get down,' says he.

"'Thank you, your honor,' says I, 'and it's just what I'd like, for I'm goin' to the fair mesilf to trade me

eggs for a ribbon for Molly,' and then I looked around, and there were me eggs all scrambled, ready for the atein', into what the Frinch cooks to the gentry calls a epaulette, or an amulit, or the likes of that.

"Well, the gintleman, when he see the condition of the eggs, first he laughed, and thin he said it was a pity, it was; but niver moind, Molly should have her ribbon, and the best he could find at the fair. With that we rode on togither, an' a right pleasant-spoken man I found him, barrin' a great trick of askin' questions about the tinants, and the agent, and how much the pertaties sold for, and how much I could save when the rint was paid, and this, that, and the other. And at the fair, he was here, there, and iverywhere, talkin' with ivery one, and askin' and askin' more questions than a praste with the catechism. But he didn't forget Molly's ribbon, don't you be talkin'; an illegant one it was, with a rid satin shtripe and roses blossomin' all over it. Thin he said, 'Donal, come in; let me see you take a turn at the dancin';' but though there was a harper an' a fiddler on the grounds there was no one dancin'. 'And why is this?' says his honor.

"'If your honor pleases,' says I, 'it's because the poor people of this country have little time, money or heart to spend on the dancin'.'

"'It doesn't please my honor at all,' says the gintleman. 'I've heard so much of the blithe village games of Ireland, I fancied a fair would be much gayer.'

"'You should have seen our fair in the ould days,' says I, whin

> "'The byes were all in muslin dressed,
> And the girls in corduroy.'

"Thin we set out for home, and on the way we stopped at a school-house, and it's empty we found it, and no glass in the windys, or floor, barrin' the ground.

"Feyther McClosky, the parish priest, saw us comin' out of the school-house, and he came over from the church, and his honor bowed to him, and asked him a mort o' questions, as he had me, and gave him some

money for the church-poor. And whin Feyther McClosky tould him that the rayson the children didn't go to school was because they had not time from the work, and besides it was no one's business to send us a tacher or rid' up the school-house,

"'It's *my* business,' says his honor, 'an' what that agent of mine's been doin' these years, I can't consave.'

"With that they shook hands friendly, and in a short time we reached me cottage, and there was Molly standin' in the doorway with the surprise knocked into her to see me come drivin' up like a lord.

"'Is this where you live?' says his honor; 'why, it's on me own land.' And thin, whin he come to a stand, so that he could look into the cottage:

"'Is it possible that human craythers live in sich a hovel?' says he.

"'Please your honor to look in, you'll find it clane,' says I. 'It's not much that Molly has brains for, but scrubbin' is not above the measure of her understandin'.'

"'I thought the Irish kept their pig in the parlor,' says he.

"'Please your honor,' says I, 'the pig wint to pay the last quarter's rint, and Molly has been lonesome enough without the darlint.'

"With this he says, 'Come up to the Hall, and I'll send you back with one of me best Suffolks.'

"As I was climbing into the dog-cart, he noticed that there was no doore to the cottage, and av coorse he asked me the why of that, and I tould him how we lost it in the bog, and I thought he would a died of laughin'.

"'She's a good girl, is Molly,' says he; 'a faithful heart like hers is better than the best intellect in the world.

"'Sure it's truth your honor is spakin',' says I. 'If I could find out who the spalpeen is that has the ownin' of her heart, sure it's a good drubbin' I'd give, for I misthrust he's not treating Molly right, for they were to have been married last Michaelmas, and it's two months gone.'

"'Find him out,' says his honor, 'and give him a good batin', with me compliments.'

"'I will that same,' says I, and that was the first and only promise that I iver broke to his honor.

"He sint me home with a basket of victuals, and a beautiful little spotted, black-and-white pig, tied by the hind leg of him, which gave me such a chase that whin I reached home again, I was worn out intirely. But it was a lucky day for us both, and Molly was taken with admiration, what first with the pig and thin with the victuals, and thin with the ribbon, and lastly with the thought that our own landlord had come home to live amongst us like a Christian, that she clean forgot to give me Murtagh's message until it was nearly bed-time.

"Now, if she had given me the errant as it was given to her, divil a bit would I have stirred out of the shanty that night, but, says she, 'Whist! Donal, and you haven't caught all the good luck that's stirrin' yit,' says she, 'for Murtagh was here the mornin', and he says for you to come to the crannach in Ballymoran Forest at midnight, dressed in me petticoats, and you will see some fine fun the night.'

"'Dressed in your petticoats!' says I, 'and what rayson did Murtagh give that I should rig meself out as a woman, as though it were a Candlemas procession?'

"'Niver a bit of a rayson, but belike, it's some fun of the byes, for it's particular he was about it and made me say over three times, 'be sure he comes in skirts to the forest.'

"Well, I felt gayer that night than I had for many a day, and I thought I would like nothin' better nor a frolic with the byes; so I let Molly disfigure me by putting her Sunday dress on me, one with big flowers on to it, a stoilish kind of caliky that they covers sofys with in the houses of the gintry. An' I tied a kercher over me head, an' I hardly knew whether I was Molly or Molly was I. Thin I took the remnints of our supper along in the basket, for I thought I'd treat the byes and we'd all drink to the health of our young landlord.

"Well, I wint on gaily enough till I come to the hedge foreninst the forest, and thin two of the byes jumped up from a ditch, with guns in their hands, and pinted

thim at me. 'Give the pass-word,' says they, 'or you're a dead woman.' With that I threw one of 'em a hunk of mutton-pie, and the other a piece of plum-puddin', and they lowered their guns and let me pass. 'It's Molly Malloy,' says one. 'Whin is your cousin comin'?' says the other. 'He's not far off,' says I, imitatin' me cousin's vice. 'Where are the byes?'

"'They're in the crannach,' says one, and I wint on, but I misthrusted now what sort of a frolic I'd fallen into, and purty soon I found mesilf amongst a dozen or twinty of them all talkin' and conspirin' amongst themselves. 'What have you let that woman come here for?' says the leader to one of the guards.

"'Sure, she's the bearer of important dispatches,' says he; 'an',' he says in a whisper, 'it's only half-witted Molly Malloy, and she's that thick-headed she'll niver undershtand nothing,' says he.

"With that I dropped thim a curtsy and thanked the gintlemen for their politeness, and said that me brother, who had come home from the fair with a broken head, had sint them some pervisions to testify his kind feelin's. They grumbled to thimsilves, and some one said, low-like, that if Donal had come, he wouldn't have got off that night, for there was work to be done, and thim that were not moinded to help should have their mouths shut. Thin they sint me away, but not till I had heard by bits that there was an attack planned for that very night, come two hours, when all were asleep at the Hall, an' that they meant to give the new landlord a house-warmin' that should not be of a welcome. Afther this they hustled me out of the wood, and I took to me legs with all me might for the Hall, and informed on thim—the villains!

"But his honor didn't have the house put into a state of defince at all, at all. Instid of that, he ordered it lighted from garret to cellar, and tould the servants to hurry and set out a big supper, and me to run for Feyther McClosky to come in and make a spache of welcome to his company. And Feyther McClosky arrived in the nick of time, and come out on the balcony with his

honor, just as the byes marched up foreninst the house. 'And,' says he, 'his honor has heard of your kind intintions to give him a surprise party,' says he, 'and has pervided a little supper, to which he bids you all welcome.'

"Well, whativer Feyther McClosky tould the byes to do, that they did; and whin he tould thim to eat first, one slipped his blunderbuss into his coat-tail pocket, and another threw away his shillaly, and another hid his shotgun behind the hedge, an' so they all came into the Hall and ate their fills.

"Thin his honor talked to thim, an' tould thim his intintions of doin' his best by thim, and they inded by givin' him three cheers.

"The school-house has been rid' up, and Molly has took to the larnin'; by the same token she makes fewer mistakes than formerly, and a better behaved or more peaceable parish than ours you'll not find in Tipperary, or a kinder landlord, and all through the twistifications of Molly.

"And the weddin'? Sure, a finer was niver seen in the parish, for his honor sint the band from Cashel, and we had dancin' on the green, and a barbecue, at which the spotted pig had the pleasure of bein' roasted, and other good victuals galore. For it's mesilf that would give Molly a good send-off, more especially as I had no fault to find with her swateheart, barrin' his slowness in the courtin'. It was the day afther the house-warmin' at the Hall that I had the pleasure of makin' his acquaintance.

"'Molly,' says I (we were workin' in the field togither), 'Molly, that swateheart of yours is a bit backward in comin' forward.'

"'He is,' says she.

"'Spake the word, and I'll larrup him,' says I.

"'Don't throuble yourself, Donal, he can take his time.'

"'Oh, give him up, Molly, bad luck to him! Sure, it's not much you care for him, I'm thinkin', and there's others a-waitin' to take his place. Sure, I'll marry you

mesilf, if ye'll tell me who he is, and let me give him his walkin' ticket, the villain!'

"'Sure, I'll niver give him up,' says Molly, 'not if his honor himself axed me to be lady of the Hall, for I love him more than the wurrld besides. And yees needn't look so black, Donal, for it's you, darlint, that I'll marry, and no other at all, at all!'

"'Molly, Molly,' says I, when I could spake for kissin' her, 'this is the worst twistification of all, for who could have thought that I was your swateheart?'

"'Thin it's you that has twistified the matther,' says Molly, 'for it's mesilf that knew it all the time,' says she."

This touching sketch appeared anonymously in *Le Français*, and has been translated for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter.

THE LITTLE THIEF.

"AH, the scoundrels!" exclaimed the old guard, planting himself before a tomb.

He had never witnessed such destruction. For several days it had been going on, and it had confounded him, and filled him with indignation. And yet it was but a little while ago that he had made his official rounds through all the silent avenues.

This had been "Father John's" duty for thirty years. He had quitted his regiment only because of severe wounds, but, thanks to his excellent constitution, he recovered from his injuries and had obtained the modest place of forester in the cemetery of Ivry.

An old man without family, he found himself alone after leaving his comrades, and without friends, save those who loved him for the military medal which he wore upon his breast; and so he grew to have a veritable love for the tombs which were confided to his care.

His tombs were his family, his friends, his regiment; and his days ran on in a happy calm. But his satisfaction was beginning to disappear. Suddenly his quiet life had been poisoned. Grief positively tortured him, filled his heart with indignation and made his blood boil. Some one was stealing from the tombs.

The shock was a heavy one. The artistically-carved Christs, the golden medallions, all the objects of value were disarranged. On one tomb, resplendent with bouquets of choice flowers, in which were put notes saying that "those who remained did not forget," some sacrilegious hand had profaned the pious souvenirs, tearing up the pretty flowers, and in a corner nothing but the note remained, seeming to say, "A thief! A thief!"

With hands wide spread, Father John stood before

the tomb; he could not withdraw his eyes. The evening before, it was so beautiful, and surrounded by a real garden,—as lovely a spot as was to be found in the whole place. A devastating hand had passed that way, dragging up the most beautiful roses, ruthlessly overturning the sacred dust, leaving behind havoc and devastation. His pent-up wrath mounted to the old man's head, and flushed his face with a deep red. But a single hope remained—"to surprise the malefactor and——"

He did not finish, but with his arms extended, and shaking his fists in the air, he menaced the unknown author of the mischief. Then he resumed his walk, saying at each step as if it were a refrain which contained all his wrath, "What can induce anybody to become such a rascal!"

Suddenly, on turning a corner, the old soldier saw a little girl trotting along, with uncertain steps. Her dress was a mere rag, through which could be seen her rosy skin. The scanty robe was covered with mud, and her arms, red with the cold, sought to hide under her fringe of tatters. From afar the forester followed her.

"Probably," he thought, "she is one of those little beggars who hang about the grounds,—poor little vagabonds sent by their parents to beg alms of the visitors."

But quickly his eyes burned with anger. He wished to shriek, but, suffocated with wrath, he could not. He saw the little girl stop beside a grave and seize with both hands a rose-bush, which she shook with violence, and by a final effort uprooted. She bore the shrub in her arms, and ran right before him, stumbling at each step, and bruising her naked feet without a note of complaint, seeing nothing, and not even hearing behind her the wheezing breath of the old soldier, who followed closely, saying between his clenched teeth: "Ah! little thief! I have got you! You are doing a good business."

II.

When Father John overtook her at the foot of the garden in the paupers' corner, the child was on her knees before a grave which formed a strong contrast

to the great simplicity of those which surrounded it. At the head of this grave was a little wooden cross—badly planted, for it was in the middle of the grave; but around it, as upon the tombs of the wealthy, superb flowers were scattered.

The guard, astonished, stopped short beside the little one who was kneeling upon the frost-hardened ground. She murmured aloud unintelligible words, while her body was convulsively shaken with sobs.

She uttered plaintive groans, and great tears rolled down her thin cheeks. She raised her head, clasped her hands, and her childish voice uttered a prayer, in the silence. Then she took the rose-bush which she had laid upon the ground beside her, gave a long kiss to one of the roses and began to dig a little hollow in the earth with her fingers. In this she planted the shrub.

Behind her, Father John had instinctively taken off his hat, but he soon put it on his head again, and out of patience with himself for his momentary forgetfulness, called himself an "old beast." He decided to finish the little drama before him by placing his hand upon the shoulder of the child. His rough touch made her turn with a quick motion, and at his cry, "At last I have got you, you little thief!" she gave a convulsive moan. Frightened, then bewildered, like one coming out of a dream, she raised her little face all blue with the cold, and saw the wrathful face of the forester, and in her ears she heard his rough voice menacingly calling her "a little thief."

Then she uttered a cry, and looked as though she would flee; but, paralyzed by fright, she remained nailed to the ground. Her teeth were chattering, a shiver ran through her whole frame, and her great, astonished eyes fixed themselves upon those of the gardener. He softened his voice.

"Now it seems impossible to me that this pretty head should belong to a miserable child-thief."

The little one remained mute. Then anger seized him once more, and he cried, "Speak then,—tell me where——"

He did not finish, for, without making any effort to escape, the child drooped her head. Then she moved her lips as though she were going to speak, but sobs choked her. Beside herself with emotion, she fell heavily upon her knees. She pointed with a finger still black with earth at the newly-made mound.

Father John did not understand. His anger had completely faded away before the child's great grief. He forgot his indignation against her, raised her in his arms, pressed her gently against his breast, and warmed her face in his large hands, whispering into her ear, "See, little one, I will do you no harm. Don't cry any more. Just tell me why you took the flowers from the other lots to bring them here?"

Then the child, in a broken voice, told her story: "My mamma loved flowers so much, sir!" A sob almost interrupted her, but she summoned all her force and cried: "She is dead,—my mamma! They brought her here. I came to get her flowers."

"But thy father?" asked the gardener. The child looked at him with an innocent, astonished air.

"I do not know. I know only my mamma, my pretty mamma. Ah, sir, let me get her flowers."

Roughly the old man fondled her and wept in his turn. Her head instinctively nestled in the warm shelter.

"Ah! thy mother loved flowers! Well, but thou must not steal them! Come with me. My garden is full of them. We will go and pick some, and we will bring them to your mamma."

"Truly? truly? Is it true?" cried the little one, quickly comforted. Her small arms clung more closely around the old man's neck, and, giving him a warm caress, she said, with infantile tenderness, "Oh! how I love you!" Then resuming a serious air, she slid to the ground, and kneeling and looking upward she said aloud: "Our Father which art in Heaven——"

Then the gardener, standing near her, murmured, "Poor little thief! though I have caught you, your business is so good that you shall henceforth be my child."

This true story of life in New England, before the Revolution, was written for ROMANCE by Emilie Egan.

SAVING THE SETTLEMENT.

SANDY MACFABIN'S parents, with a number of their companions, were murdered in the year 1766 by the Indians. The unfortunate settlers were on their way from Connecticut to a new settlement in the Hampshire Grants, where they had already purchased lands.

Only four of the party escaped: a Mr. Murkland and his wife, their infant daughter Affie, and Sandy, whom Mr. Murkland found lying under a log, badly wounded, and hugging tight in his arms his father's last gift, his puppy Boone.

Though their stock was driven off, their goods were untouched, and a large sum of money, belonging to Sandy's father, was found undisturbed, leaving Sandy very rich—for those times.

Sandy, who was a boy of uncommon intelligence and bravery, lived with Mr. Murkland until 1771. He was then fifteen years old, large, strong, and well-disposed, in spite of the fact that he had spent his time much as he pleased. Money, then as now, made a difference in the treatment of boys who had it. He roamed the woods all day with Boone and his gun, returning at night to pet and caress the little Affie, on whom he seemed to have bestowed the entire affection of his orphaned heart.

It became known that Sandy's money was kept in Mr. Murkland's cabin, and one night the cabin was broken into and an attempt was made to steal the gold. The worry that this gave Mr. Murkland determined Sandy to take care of his property himself; and though Mr. Murkland had already allowed the boy to take up his father's land, and had helped to build his cabin, he objected to his taking the money, the new cabin

being at a considerable distance from the older settlement.

"You needn't worry about it," was Sandy's sturdy reply. "I'm not going to keep my money in the cabin. I have got a place for it, that no living man can find."

This ended Mr. Murkland's objections, and Sandy was moved, with all his belongings, to his own cabin.

About the time of the breaking-in of Mr. Murkland's cabin, there came to the place one "Hub" Hanson, who immediately attached himself to Sandy, hunting and trapping constantly with him. He had no family, but he had a numerous following of both English and Indians, which drew great prejudice upon him.

People grew suspicious of him, and expressed their suspicions to Sandy; but all that the boy said was, "If Hanson is after that money, he'll have to hunt for it."

Contrary to Mr. Murkland's hopes, Sandy made little progress in clearing up his land. Most of his time was spent in hunting and trapping; yet he had some notion of improvements, for during the winter he busied himself evenings in scooping out a cellar underneath his cabin floor. While thus occupied, he discovered, by the falling in of some loose stones and dirt, a small natural cave.

Taking a torch, he followed its zigzag course, for what seemed to him a long distance, coming suddenly out, much to his astonishment, between two immense boulders.

"My! but this is a queer find!" he ejaculated, hastily backing in to conceal his torch; for bubbling from between the rocks, not more than two feet from where he had come out, was the very spring, into whose friendly mud he had consigned the box containing his money.

"Faith!" muttered the boy, as he hurried back to remove all traces of his work, "I'll take precious care that Hanson don't find out that I've been digging a cellar"

As spring opened, rumors of Indian depredations reached the settlement, and the blockhouse in the middle of it became the scene of many an anxious discussion among the inhabitants for their mutual safety. It

was whispered that renegade Englishmen usually led these attacks, and Sandy, though he said nothing to his mates about it, took it upon himself to watch Hub Hanson. In spite of the watching, however, he and all his followers suddenly disappeared.

This happened about the middle of June. The next day after their mysterious flight Sandy returned from a long tramp over their common hunting and trapping ground. His usually impassive face was clouded and anxious, for not a trace of the man's whereabouts could be found.

After finishing his supper, and raking up his fire, he said, taking down his gun, "Boone, we've got to go over to the settlement; for Hanson has gone off for no good, and the folks must be told." As he closed the door after him, he murmured, "There ought to be scouts out, and I'll offer myself to go as one, to hunt the wretches away from here."

Sandy had gone no more than fifty rods, in the now rapidly-darkening woods, when he was suddenly surrounded by the very wretches of whom he had been speaking.

"They're bound for the settlement!" flashed immediately through his mind. The next instant, the half-circle of men and boys in front of him was knocked into confusion by a powerful blow from the butt of his gun, and he had bounded far in front of them.

"Stop him!" shouted one, and added immediately after, "Don't shoot him!" all in good English.

But scores of arrows chipped among the trees, as Sandy fled for his cabin, intent on leading the chase away from the settlement. It was a race, swift and noiseless, but one befeathered wretch bounded into the cabin, side by side with Sandy, saying, in broken English, as he shut and bolted the door after them, "You—my—prisoner."

"Ho! Am I, Hub Hanson?" was Sandy's quick retort.

"Waugh! Waugh!"

Sandy's blood was up. His long familiarity with

Hub Hanson had bred contempt for him, and now that he had caught him in a false position, his anger and contempt blazed above his fear. "You may 'waugh-waugh' and paint yourself as much as you're a mind to, you sneaking tory," he cried, "but you'll never be half as decent as a red-skin!"

Angered at the scathing denunciation, Hanson threw off all attempt at disguise.

"Well, then, as you know me so well," he said coolly, "perhaps you can tell what I want of you?"

"You want the money you failed to get when you broke into Mr. Murkland's house, more than a year-and-a-half ago!"

"Sho, now! Then light up"—advancing and kicking open the smouldering coals—"and get it. You'd better be spry if you want to keep your skin whole, for I can't keep those dandies out there waiting very long."

"My skin isn't whole, now," retorted Sandy, possessing himself of his tow-towel, and winding it around his hand to stanch the flow of blood there, "for an arrow has gone through my hand."

"Has? That's bad. Then tell me where your pitch knots are, and I'll light one."

That was just what Sandy wanted, and while Hanson was rummaging for the knots, he glided to the trap-door. Leaping into the cavity, he closed the trap softly after him, and the next moment he was feeling his way rapidly through his "queer find."

"There," he muttered, as he emerged into the open air, "you may hunt, now, and I'll get to the settlement without your help."

When he reached Mr. Murkland's cabin, he was surprised to find it filled with women and children, and amidst sobs, ejaculations of pity and incoherent explanations, he learned, to his dismay, what put a terrible finish to the desperate condition of affairs. Affie was lost.

She had strayed away from the other children while they were up in the "stump-piece" strawberrying, and the men had gone up the mountain with torches looking for her.

There was not a moment to be lost. The boy told them that the Indians were coming, adding, raising his voice above the cries of alarm, "Get to the block-house! Give the alarm to everybody, and then get in as quick as you can!"

For a moment, as the last figure disappeared in the darkness, the poor boy stood as if stunned, listening to the sobs of Mrs. Murkland, still crouched upon the floor too overcome by her loss to heed aught else.

A sudden swish was heard outside, and the next instant Boone leaped through the open door to his master's shoulder. A thankful cry, that his dog was not killed as he feared, a passionate kiss on the big, ugly face upturned to his, and Sandy had recovered from his boyish panic.

Turning to Mrs. Murkland, he said, shaking her sharply by the shoulder, "Get up, and get me something to write with!"

The poor woman arose, with a dazed, scared look on her face at the unusual tone of command in the boy's voice, but in a moment she brought him what he wanted.

"Now, get me Mr. Murkland's red silk handkerchief, and a shoe of Affie's."

She obeyed, the energy in his tone compelling her, without question; and Sandy knelt before the fire, resting the coarse paper on the towel bandage of his wounded left hand, and making, with a goose-quill-pen, the tortured pot-hooks that had cost Mrs. Murkland so much teaching:

"*Indians!!* Put out your torches! All in the block-house. Give Boone Affie's shoe. Come to the trench trap-door. SANDY."

Giving the handkerchief a rub across Boone's nose, Sandy proceeded to secure the note and shoe in its folds, talking to the intelligent old fellow the while, and at the word "Go!" he bounded out into the darkness.

The blockhouse was built by the first settlers who came to the place, and their cabins were clustered around it. Sandy was relieved to find that Mrs. Murk-

land and himself were the last to enter it; even those living furthest off had come in.

Everything was in the most pitiable confusion. No one—though every gun in the place was brought in—had thought of making any defence.

"This won't do!" thought the brave boy who was trying to save the settlement, and his voice presently rang out over the din, "Every man and boy that can bear a gun, come to the roof with me!"

As he reached the roof, he saw a light which he knew was that of his burning cabin; and though he at first intended to consult with the few old men, that sight put everything else out of his mind, except the protection of the women and children, and the immediate steps to be taken.

By tacit consent, though he was one of the youngest there, Sandy took command.

He assigned every man, gun and boy to a special place, until every loop-hole was manned. Then, leaving one old man on the roof, Sandy appealed to the women for help.

"There," said he, as he ranged them on the wide flat stone covering the mouth of the trench, which, as in most of the blockhouses of that period, led underground to a secret opening within the settlement outside; "you must keep a sharp lookout, that none but our friends get in, for the Indians will certainly find the trench."

The boy, realizing the great necessity for silence, muttered hopefully to himself, as he made his way to the loop-hole in the large plank door, "Now, the poor things can't cry for listening."

There followed half-an-hour of the most horrible waiting. This was the first time, since the alarm, that Sandy had had to think. All of the able-bodied men were gone. They, and his dear little Affie, were probably murdered ere now!

The cold sweat broke over his trembling body, as he thought of the responsibility resting upon him, and smothering, in the bandage of his wounded hand, his

mortal cry for help, he sank upon the stone floor, where he prayed, as one prays seldom in a life-time.

Sandy arose, calmed and strengthened, and it was well that he was so, for almost immediately the man on the roof announced, in a hoarse, shaking whisper, as he leaned over the opening, "Indians among the cabins!"

The only way by which their presence could be detected was by the alternate shining and darkening, through the open doors and windows, of the hearth-fires of the suddenly abandoned cabins, as the Indians moved about, rummaging for spoils.

Though some of the cabins were within easy range of the loop-holes, Sandy commanded "No firing!" for fear of bringing on the attack. It was better to watch and wait, for he well appreciated how fearfully inadequate his few old men, women and children were to cope with their cruel foe.

Sandy judged rightly that the door would be the principal point of attack, and when the fires were put out in the cabins, and silence reigned, he knew that the enemy were coming.

A sudden shuffling of stealthy feet was heard outside, and the boy fired. There was a stumble, a fall, and Sandy saw the white end of a log roll over in the path.

"The idiots don't know that I can see the white end of their log," muttered he, as he dodged back to reload. The spatter of bullets and arrows for a few minutes was fearful, and when he next dared to look out, the white end of the huge battering-ram was perilously near the door, being borne with a rush for the blow.

Sandy's next shot, aimed just above the white end, told with fearful effect. There was a shriek in mingled voices, and the log swayed and fell, followed by the sound of retreating feet and dragging bodies, as the wounded were borne away.

The attack had now become general, the bullets and arrows flying through every loop-hole, till no man dared take aim; but Sandy, by poising his gun through the loop-hole at about the angle of his last aim, managed,

for the whole hour of rapid firing, to prevent another attempt to break in the door.

The withdrawal—after the manner of Indian warfare, to take counsel and arrange for a more effective attack—left the occupants of the blockhouse in a dazed silence by its very suddenness; but Sandy, who was the first to recover, had commenced to call the names, to find if any were killed or wounded, when he was interrupted by a sharp whisper of alarm from the women at the trap-door, "Sandy! there's somebody in the trench!"

Sandy hurried to the place, and placing his mouth close to the edge of the stone, asked in a clear, ringing tone, "Who's there?"

"Murkland, Sandy," came back.

Then the shrill voice of a child cried unmistakably, "Mother! Mother, let me in! Affie's comed back!"

Instantly the heavy flat stone was removed, and the next moment Affie was sobbing out her fright and grief in her mother's arms.

Each man answered to his name, as Sandy helped him clamber up; and, thank heaven, they were all there!

The last to come up was Boone, the good dog, who bounded in with an ugly growl which meant mischief.

"Indians, Boone?" asked Sandy, instinctively reaching out his hand to the dog's bristling back.

"Quick, men! Put back the stone!"

A savage yell, from the baffled Indians beneath, told how narrow had been their escape, as the stone slid to its place.

Without a moment's hesitation the stone was filled to its very edges by the women and older girls, for they knew that the attack was renewed, and that the men must be left free to use the guns.

There was no time to change leaders, even had any wished it, nor to inquire for the wounded—though it was known that none were yet killed—for the roof sentinel was already descending the ladder, shouting, "They're on the roof!"

"Pull down the ladder!" rang out Sandy's voice, "and stand where you are!"

Calling rapidly by name a number of the returned men, he bade them form a circle around the opening, and in like manner an outer circle was formed with the remainder, himself among the latter.

"Fire at the first sound," he said, "then jump back to load, and we'll take your places."

The opening, not more than eight feet from the ground, was large enough to admit six or eight bodies, and the Indians' probable intention was to make a rush; but the rush was met by a concentrated fire from beneath, with terrible effect.

Following the horrible death screams which told of the awful work of the guns as the bodies fell, gasping their last on the stone floor, there came a deafening report from the roof, and a score of bullets battered and glanced upon the stones. The men, recognizing the danger from the glancing bullets, bounded out into a wider circle; but returned, with their deadly fire, at every attempt of the infuriated Indians to make an entrance.

Though the conflict carried on there in the dark was short, it was fearful. Many of the men were wounded and were rapidly weakening from the loss of blood; but, even after the retreat was sounded from the roof, they were left with the horrors of the conflict, in the heap of dead and dying Indians. No one had the heart to fire into the groaning mass, to dispatch the sufferers. Nothing could be done with them but to watch and see that they did not crawl away, and this they did, the men taking turns in going to the women to have their wounds bandaged with strips torn from their gowns and aprons.

They had not long, however, to work in the dark, for a light suddenly streaked up, which was immediately followed by the cry, "They're firing the cabins!"

"My God!" cried Sandy, snatching the half-wound bandage from his now badly-wounded right arm, "they're going to burn us!"

Through the commotion that followed his alarmed cry, he saw his error in thus raising a panic, and like the brave heart that he was, he commanded kindly but firmly, "Each keep to his place."

"We'll have to go to the roof, men," he added. "All but those at the loop-holes."

"Probably," said Sandy, as they reached the roof and were crouching behind the low breastwork, "while we were fighting the wretches on the roof, others were piling brush around the blockhouse; and we must prevent their setting it afire."

It was an awful thing to do, plainly visible to the Indians as they would be from the lights of the burning cabins, but the dread alternative braced each man to his duty. For it was found to be as Sandy had said, and worse, since the trenches had been filled with straw from the beds.

"Going to smoke us out!" muttered Sandy, as he made this discovery.

The men fought with the madness of despair. Many fell, mortally wounded, and yet those who still stood rallied again and again to repel the attempts, from different directions, to set fire to the brush.

But all was to no purpose, against so many foes. Presently the brush was burning in a dozen places! To add, if possible, to the horror of the situation, the women and children, at the first sight of the flames, came screaming and crying to the roof.

The scene was awful. Screams of anguish rose incessantly, as one after another discovered father, son or brother dead, wounded or dying. Then a voice rose in prayer, and they all sank down, subduing their sobs and cries, and bowing to the very roof—to pray and to wait.

All firing had ceased, for the Indians, feeling sure of their victims, had withdrawn to a convenient distance, to enjoy the torture they were inflicting.

But what was that! Sandy raised his head, and an unmistakable spatter of rain struck his face.

"Will it come!" he gasped, as his eyes caught the

distant flash of lightning. Ah, here it comes. The dark rain-clouds, pierced by swords of vivid lightning, emptied their welcome contents down upon the devoted little band.

They were saved. Aye, and better than they knew, for when the rain had passed, they found that the superstitious savages had fled from the terrific storm, fearing that they had offended the Great Spirit.

The settlers found their way to Bradford in the morning, where they obtained help to bury the dead and care for the wounded, and get much-needed provisions.

The next year found their cabins rebuilt—the older boys taking the places of their slain fathers—and Sandy dug up his money, establishing a trading post—the first store in the township.

None ever tired of telling of the part Boone took in saving them; and Mr. Murkland, though seriously wounded, lived to tell it many times, always assisted by Affie, who had the most unbounded love for the old fellow.

"You see," he would say, "we went right up through these first woods to the back stump-piece, thinking that she had got bewildered with the woods all around her, and that, in her first fright when she found herself alone, she would just as quick go up the mountain. We'd been calling her name and waving our torches for an hour, I should think, and had got back down into the hollow between the mountain and the strawberry hill, when Boone bounded in among us.

"I knew the handkerchief, and I tell you, it wa'n't many seconds before the torches were out, and the shoe thrust into Boone's mouth. Boone bounded off, leaving us standing there like men of stone. But that trance of stunned misery saved us a deal of anxious worry, for we heard Boone bark, and the next minute Affie's scream.

"I haven't any idea how we got to them—though it wasn't more than forty rods—but we did, and then we started, single file, for the blockhouse. I had Affie in

my arms, and I tell you it was awful, stumbling along there in the dark. Boone kept in front, and by dint of whining and brushing against the leading man's legs, he kept us going straight. But the progress was slow, and we all got many a tumble; until, once, when the leader went down, accidentally he caught hold of Boone's tail.

"The old fellow made no attempt to get away—just as if he knew what was needed—and, each man taking hold of his neighbor, we were led silently and swiftly, straight to the trench.

"Yes," he would finish, "when the struggle for freedom came, Sandy went into the Continental Army, and it was there that he saw Hub Hanson suffer his just doom at the end of a rope, for having led the Indians on our settlement in '71."

Much of Scottish song and story is hallowed with the intense and awful mysticism which characterizes this story by Walter Scott's favorite, Allan Cunningham. The beautiful but lengthy ballads which illustrate the tale have been necessarily omitted. The charm of this sort of literature is quite as great for most readers as though it were more cheerful.

THE LAST LORD OF HELVELLYN.

"An ancient curse still clings to their name."

"It was, I think, in the year seventeen hundred and thirty-three, that, one fine summer evening, I sat on the summit of Rosefoster-cliff, gazing on the multitudes of waves which, swelled by the breeze, and whitened by the moonlight, undulated as far as the eye could reach. The many lights, gleaming from Allanbay, were extinguished one by one; the twinklings of remote Saint Bees glimmered fainter and fainter on the Solway; while the villages and mansions on the Scottish coast, from Annand to Kirkcudbright, were perfectly silent and dark as beseemed their devout and frugal inhabitants. As I sat and thought on the perils I had encountered and braved on the great deep, I observed a low dark mist arise from the middle of the Solway; which, swelling out, suddenly came rolling huge and sable toward the Cumberland shore. Nor was fear or fancy long in supplying this exhalation with sails, and pennons, and the busy hum and murmur of mariners. As it approached the cliff on which I had seated myself, it was not without dismay that I observed it become more dark, and assume more distinctly the shape of a barge, with a shroud for a sail. It left the sea, and settled on the beach within sea-mark, maintaining still its form, and still sending forth the merry din of mariners. In a moment the voices were changed from mirth to sorrow; and I heard a sound and outcry like the shriek of a ship's company whom the sea is swal-

lowing. The cloud dissolved away, and in its place I beheld, as it were, the forms of seven men, shaped from the cloud, and stretched black on the beach; even as corpses are prepared for the coffin. I was then young, and not conversant with the ways in which He above reveals and shadows out approaching sorrow to man. I went down to the beach, and though the moon, nigh the full, and in mid-heaven, threw down an unbroken light,—rendering visible mountain and headland and sea, so that I might count the pebbles and shells on the shore—the seven black shadows of men had not departed, and there appeared a space in the middle, like room measured out for an eighth. A strange terror came upon me; and I began to dread that this vision was sent for my warning; for be assured, Heaven hath many and singular revelations for the welfare and instruction of man. I prayed, and, while I prayed, the seven shadows began to move—filling up the space prepared for another; then they waxed dimmer and dimmer, and then wholly vanished!

"I was much moved; and, deeming it the revelation of approaching sorrow, in which I was to be a sharer, it was past midnight before I could fall asleep. The sun had been some time risen when I was awakened by Simon Forester, who, coming to my bedside, said, 'Richard Faulder, arise, for young Lord William of Helvellyn Hall has launched his new barge on the Solway, and seven of the best and boldest mariners of Allanbay must bear him company to bring his fair bride from Preston Hall—even at the foot of the mountain Criffell; hasten and come, for he sails not, be sure, without Richard Faulder!'

"It was a gallant sight to see a shallop, with her halsers and sails of silk covered with streamers, and damasked with gold, pushing gaily from the bay. It was gallant, too, to behold the lordly bridegroom, as he stood on the prow, looking toward his true-love's land; not heeding the shout, and the song, and the music-swell, with which his departure was hailed. It was gallant to see the maids and the matrons of Cumber-

land, standing in crowds, on headland and cliff, waving their white hands seaward, as we spread our sails to the wind, and shot away into the Solway, with our streamers dancing and fluttering like the mane of a steed as he gallops against the wind. Proud of our charge, and glorying in our skill, we made the good ship go through the surge as we willed; and every turn we made, and every time we wetted her silken sails, there came shout and trumpet-sound from the shore, applauding the seven merry mariners of Allanbay.

"Helvellyn Hall, of which there is now no stone standing, save an old sun-dial around which herdsmen gather at noonday, to hear of old marvels of the Foresters, was an extensive mansion—built in the times when perils from the pirate and the Scot were dreaded—and stood on a swelling knoll, encompassed with wood, visible from afar to mariners. In the centre was a tower and on the summit of the tower was a seat, and in that seat tradition will yet tell you that the good Lord Walter Forester sat for a certain time, in every day of the year, looking on the sea. The swallows and other birds which made their nests and their roosts on the castle-top, became so accustomed to his presence that they built, and sang, and brought forth their young beside him; and old men, as they beheld him, shook their heads, and muttered over the ancient prophecy which a saint, who suffered from persecution, had uttered against the house of Helvellyn.

> Let the Lord of Helvellyn look long on the sea—
> For a sound shall he hear, and a sight shall he see;
> The sight he shall see is a bonnie ship sailing,
> The sound he shall hear is of weeping and wailing;
> A sight shall he see on the green Solway shore,
> And no lord of Helvellyn shall ever see more.

"As we scudded swiftly through the water, I looked toward the shore of Cumberland, stretching far and near, with all its winding outline, interrupted with woody promontories; and there I beheld the old Lord Walter of Helvellyn, seated on the topmost tower of his castle, looking toward the Scottish shore. I thought on

the dying man's rhyme; and thought on the vision of last night: and I counted the mariners, and looked again on the castle and Lord Walter; and I saw that the fulfilling of the prophecy and the vision was approaching. Though deeply affected, I managed the barge with my customary skill, and she flew across the bay, leaving a long furrow of foam behind. Michael Halmer, an old mariner of Allanbay, afterward told me he never beheld a fairer sight than the barge that day, breasting the billows; and he stood, warding off the sun with his hands from his fading eyes, till we reached the middle of the bay. At that time, he said he beheld something like a ship formed of a black cloud, sailing beside us, which moved as we moved, and tacked as we tacked; had the semblance of the same number of mariners, and, in every way, appeared like the bridegroom's barge! He trembled with dismay, for he knew the spectre shallop of Solway, which always sails by the side of the ship which the sea is about to swallow. It was not my fortune to behold fully this fearful vision; but, while I gazed toward Helvellyn Hall, I felt a dread, and although I saw nothing on which my fears could fix, I remember that a kind of haze or exhalation, resembling the thin shooting of a distant light, floated through the air at our side, which I could not long endure to look upon. The old lord still preserved his position on the tower, and sat gazing toward us, as motionless as a marble statue, and with an intensity of gaze like one who is watching the coming of destiny.

"The acclamations which greeted our departure from Cumberland were exceeded by those which welcomed us to the Scottish shore. The romantic and mountainous coast of Colvend and Siddick was crowded with shepherd and matron and maid, who stood as motionless as their native rocks, and as silent too, till we approached within reach of their voices, and then such a shout arose as startled the gulls and cormorants from rock and cavern for a full mile. The Scotch are a demure, a careful, and a singular people; and, amid much homeliness of manner, have something of a poetical

way of displaying their affections, which they treasure too for great occasions, or, as they say, 'daimen times.' There are certain of their rustics much given to the composition of song and of ballad, in which a natural elegance occasionally glimmers among their antique and liquid dialect. I have been told the Lowland language of Scotland is more soft and persuasive than even that of England; and, assuredly there was Martin Robson, a mariner of mine, in the *Mermaid*, whose wily Scotch tongue made the hearts of half the damsels of Cumberland dance to their lips. But many of their ballads are of a barbarous jingle, and can only be admired because the names of those whom their authors love and hate, and the names of hill, and dale, and coast, and stream, are interwoven with a ready ease unknown among the rustic rhymes of any other people.

"Preston Hall—the plough has long since passed over its foundation stones!—was long the residence of a branch of the powerful and ancient name of Maxwell; and such was its fame for generosity, that the beggar or pilgrim who went in at the eastern gate empty always came out at the western gate full, and blessing the bounty of the proprietor. It stood at the bottom of a deep and beautiful bay, at the entrance of which two knolls, slow in their swell from the land, and abrupt in their rise from the sea, seemed, almost, to shut out all approach. In former times, they had been crowned with slight towers of defence. It was a fairy nook for beauty; and tradition, which loves to embellish the scenes on which nature has been lavish of her bounty, asserted that the twin hillocks of Preston Bay were formerly one green hill, till a wizard, whose name has not yet ceased to work marvels, cleft the knoll asunder with his wand, and poured the sea into the aperture—laying, at the same time, the foundation-stone of Preston Hall, with his own hand. On the sides and summits of these small hills stood two crowds of peasants, who welcomed the coming of Lord William with the sounding of instruments of no remarkable harmony. As this clamorous hail ceased, the melody of maidens' tongues made

ample amends for the instrumental discord. They greeted us as we passed with a poetical welcome.

"During this minstrel salutation, the barge floated into the bosom of Preston Bay; and, through all its woody links and greenwood nooks, the song sounded mellow and more mellow, as it was flung from point to point over the sunny water. The barge soon approached the green sward, which, sloping downward from the hall, bordering with its livelier hue the dull deep green of the ocean, presented a ready landing-place. When we were within a lance's length of the shore, there appeared, coming toward us from a deep grove of holly, a female figure, attired in the manner of the farmer matrons of Scotland—with a small plaid, or mantle, fastened over her gray lint-and-woollen gown, and a white cap, or mutch, surmounting, rather than covering, a profusion of lyart locks which came over her brow and neck, like remains of winter snow. She aided her steps with a staff, and descending to the prow of the barge, till the sea touched her feet, stretched her staff seaward, and said with a deep voice and an unembarrassed tone—'What wouldest thou, William Forster, the doomed son of a doomed house, with Beatrice Maxwell, the blessed child of a house whose name shall live, and whose children shall breathe, while green woods grow, and clear streams run? Return as thou camest, nor touch a shore hostile to thee and thine. If thy foot displaces but one blade of grass, thy life will be as brief as the endurance of thy name, which that giddy boy is even now writing on the sand within seamark:—the next tide will pass over THEE—and blot IT out forever and forever! Thy father, even now watching thy course from his castle top, shall soon cease to be the warder of his house's destiny; and the Cumberland boor, as he gazes into the bosom of the Solway, shall sigh for the ancient and valiant name of Forster.'

"While this singular speech was uttering, I gazed on the person of the speaker—from whom no one, who once looked, could well withdraw his eyes. She seemed aged,—and had that kind of commanding look which

common spirits dread. Lord William listened to her words with a look of kindness and respect:—'Margery Forsythe,' he said, 'thou couldest have prophesied more fortunately and wisely, hadst thou wished it—but thou art a faithful friend and servant to my Beatrice—accept this broad piece of gold, and imagine a more pleasant tale, when, with the evening tide, I return with my love to Helvellyn.'

"The gold fell at the old woman's feet, but it lay glittering and untouched among the grass, for her mind and eye seemed intent on matters connected with the glory of her master's house.

"'Friend am I to Beatrice Maxwell, but no servant,' said Margery, in a haughty tone, 'though it's sweet to serve a face so beautiful. Touch not this shore, I say again, William Forster—but it's vain to forbid—the thing that must be must—we are foreordained to run our course—and this is the last course of the gallant house of Forster.'

"She then stepped aside, opposing Lord William no longer, who, impatient at her opposition, was preparing to leap ashore. Dipping her staff in the water as a fisher dips his rod, she held it dripping toward the Solway, to which she now addressed herself:—'False and fathomless sea—slumbering now in the sweet summer sun, like a new lulled babe, I have lived by thy side for years of sin that I shall not sum; and every year hast thou craved and yearned for thy morsel, and made the maids and matrons wail in green Galloway and Nithsdale. When wilt thou be satisfied, thou hungry sea?—even now, sunny and sweet as thou seemest, dost thou crave for the mouthful ordained to thee by ancient prophecy, and the fair and the dainty morsel is at hand.'

"Her eyes, dim and spiritless at first, became filled, while she uttered this apostrophe to the sea, with a wild and agitated light—her stature seemed to augment, and her face to dilate with more of grief than joy; and her locks, snowy and sapless with age, writhed on her forehead and temples, as if possessed with a distinct life of

their own. Throwing her staff into the sea, she then went into the grove of holly, and disappeared.

"A long train of bridal guests now came hurrying from the hall to receive the bridegroom, who, disregarding all admonition, leaped gaily ashore, and was welcomed with trumpet flourish and the continued sound of the lowland pipe. He was followed by six of his seven mariners; I alone remained, overawed by the vision I had beheld on the preceding night, by the prophetic words of the sorceress of Siddick, and by a boding forecast of disaster.

"On all sides people were seated on the rising grounds: the tree tops, the immemorial resting-places of ravens and rooks, were filled with young men, anxious to see the procession to the chapel of Preston, and to hearken the bridal joy; and even the rough and dizzy cliff of Barnhourie burn, which overlooks the Solway for many miles, had the possession of its summit disputed with its native cormorants and eagles, by some venturous schoolboys, who thus showed that love of adventure which belongs to the children of the seacoast. The sun was in noon when we landed in Preston Bay, and its edge was touching the grassy tops of the western hills of Galloway, when shout above shout, from wood and eminence, the waving of white hands from field and knoll, and the sudden awakening of all manner of clamorous and mirthful melody, announced the coming of the bridal crowd. The gates of Preston Hall burst suddenly open; out upon the level lawn gushed an inundation of youths and maidens clad in their richest dresses, and the living stream flowed down to the Solway side. As they approached, a shallop, covered from the mast-head to the water with streamers, and pennons, and garlands, came suddenly from a small anchorage scooped out of the bosom of the garden, making the coming tide gleam to a distance, with the gold and silver lavished in its decoration. But my admiration of this beautiful shallop was soon interrupted by the appearance of a lady, who, standing on the ground by the prow of the bride's barge, looked ear-

nestly seaward, and trembled so much, that the white satin dress which covered her from bosom to heel, studded, and sown, and covered with the most costly stones and metals, shook as if touched by an ungentle wind. Her long tresses, of raven black hair, and which, in the boast of maidenhood of my early days, descended till she could sit upon them, partook of her agitation. Her eyes alone, large and bright, and fringed with long lashes of a black still deeper than that of her hair, were calm and contemplative, and seemed with her mind meditating on some perilous thing. While she stood thus, a maiden came to her side, and casting a long white veil, a present from the bridegroom, over her head, shrouded her to the feet; but the elegance of her form, and the deep dark glance of her expressive eyes triumphed over the costly gift;—though the fringe was of diamonds, and the disastrous tale of the youth who perished swimming over the Solway to his love, was wrought, or rather damasked, in the middle. I could have gazed from that hour till this on this beautiful vision; but, while I looked, there came slowly from the wood a figure of a woman, bent with age or distress to the ground, and entirely covered in a black mantle: she approached the bride unperceived, and lay down at her feet—as a footstool on which she must tread before she could enter the shallop. This was unheeded of many, or of all; for the blessings showered by all ranks on the departing pair,—the bustle of the mariners preparing to sail with the tide, which now filled Preston Bay, the sounding of bugle and pipe, and the unremitting rivalry in song and ballad, between the mariners in the barges of the bridegroom and bride, successively filled every mind, save mine, overclouded then, and ever since, before some coming calamity.

"An old gentleman of the house of Maxwell, advancing through the press to the barges, at last said aloud—'A challenge, ye gallants, a challenge!—let the bridegroom take his merry mariners of England—let the bride take her mariners of old Galloway—push the barges from Preston Bay, as the signal-pipe sounds;

and a pipe of blood-red wine to a cupful of cold water, that *we* reach Allanbay first.' As the old man finished his challenge, hundreds of hats, and bonnets too, were thrown into the air, and the bridegroom, with a smile, took his offered hand and said,—'What! Sir Marmaduke Maxwell, wilt thou brave us too?—A pipe of the richest wine to a drink of the saltest brine in the centre of Solway, that the merry lads of Allanbay exceed thee at least by ten strokes of the oar.' The English mariners replied, as is their wont, with a shout, threw aside their jackets and caps, and prepared gladly for the coming contest: while the mariners of Siddick and Colvend made ready with the silent and sedate alacrity peculiar to that people. 'May I never see Skiddaw again,' said William Selby of Derwent, 'nor taste Nancy Grogson's grog, or her pretty daughter's lips, if the freshwater lads of Barnhourie surpass the salt-water lads of Allanbay.'

"'And for my part,' said Charles Carson, 'in answer to my comrade's vow, may I be turned into a sheldrake, and doomed to swim to doomsday in the lang black lake of Loughmaben, if the powkpuds of Skiddaw surpass the cannie lads of green Galloway.' And both parties, matched in numbers, in strength—of equal years, and of similar ability—stood with looks askance on each other, ready to start, and willing to win the bridal boast, and the bride or bridegroom's favor.

"'And now, my sweet bride,' said Lord William, 'shall I help thee into thy barge?—Loth am I that thy kinsman's vaunt causes a brief separation.—Now guide thy barge wisely and warily,' said he to her helmsman. 'I would rather pay the wine for thy mistress ten thousand fold, than one lock of her raven hair should be put in jeopardy.—If thou bringest her harmless into Allanbay, I will give an hundred pieces of gold to thee and thy mates.—Shouldst thou peril her in thy folly, come before my face no more.'

"'Peril Beatrice Maxwell, Lord William!' said the Scottish helmsman, with a look of proud scorn, 'my fathers have fought to the saddle laps in English blood

for the men of the house of Maxwell—and I would rather see all who own the surname of Forster sinking in the Solway, without one to help them, than be the cause of the fair maiden of Preston soiling slipper or snood. I see ye dinna ken the Howatsons of Glenhowan.'

"'I know nought of the Howatsons of Glenhowan,' said the bridegroom, 'but what I am proud and pleased with—therefore ply the oar, and manage the sail, for I have men with me who will put you to your might in both.'

"To this conciliating speech the maritime representative of the ancient Howatsons of Glenhowan returned no answer, but busying himself in his vocation, chanted, as was his wont on going upon any important mission, some fragments of an old ballad—made by one of the minstrels of the house of Maxwell, when in its glory.

"Ere the song had ceased, the bride proceeded to enter the barge, when she perceived at her feet a figure in a black mantle, and scarce refrained from shrieking. 'Margery, what wouldst thou with me, Margery?' she said; 'the cottage thou livest in I have given thee.'

"'World's wealth and creature comforts are no cares of mine,' said the old domestic of the house of Maxwell. 'I laid me down here, that ere Beatrice Maxwell departs with one of a doomed house she should step over my gray hairs. Have I not said—have I not prayed?'

"'Margery, Margery,' said the bride, 'be silent, and be wise.'

"'Are we to stand here, and listen to the idle words of a crazed menial?' said one of the house of Maxwell —'aboard, ye gallants, aboard!' and placing the bride on deck, the barges, urged by oar and sail, darted out of the bay of Preston, while the shout and song of clamoring multitudes followed us far into the ocean.

"The wind of the summer twilight, gentle and dewy, went curling the surface of the water; before us the green mountains of Cumberland rose; behind us we beheld the huge outline of the Scottish hills, while a full stonecast asunder, the barges pursued their way

and the crews, silent and anxious, had each their hopes of conquering in the contest. As we went scudding away, I looked toward the hall of Helvellyn, and there I beheld on its summit the old lord, with his gray hair —his hands clasped, and his eyes turned intent on the barge which contained his son. I thought on the prophecy, and on the vision of the preceding evening, and looked toward the hills of Scotland, now fast diminishing in the distance. At first I thought I saw the waters agitated in the track we had pursued, and continuing to gaze, I observed the sea furrowed into a tremendous hollow, following the sinuous course of the barge. I now knew this to be a whirlwind, and dreading that it would fasten on our sails, I tacked northward—the whirlwind followed also. I tacked southward, and to the south veered the whirlwind, increasing in violence as it came. The last sight I beheld was the sea at our stern, whirling round in fearful undulations. The wind at once seized our sails, turned us thrice about, and down went the barge, headforemost, in the centre of Solway. I was stunned, and felt the cold brine bubbling in my ears, as emerging from the flood I tried to swim—barge, bridegroom, and mariners were all gone. The bride's barge came in a moment to my side, and saved me, and standing for the coast of Cumberland, spread the tale of sorrow along the shore, where crowds had assembled to welcome us. The old Lord of Helvellyn remained on the castle top, after he had witnessed the loss of his son; and when his favorite servant ventured to approach, he was found seated in his chair, his hands clasped more in resignation than agony, his face turned to the Solway, and his eyes gazing with the deepest intensity, and stiff and dead. The morning tide threw the body of Lord William and those of his six mariners ashore: and when I walked down at day-dawn to the beach, I found them stretched in a row on the very spot where the vision had revealed their fate to me so darkly and so surely. Such a tale as this will be often told you among the sea-coast cottages of Cumberland."

This charming little love-story is by Paul Margueritte, and has been translated for ROMANCE by L. Barnard.

UPON A TOWER.

M. D'HERBLÉ awoke just at the time he had planned. A gray light colored dimly the flowers of his chamber curtains. He opened the window. The beautiful Norman country beneath it was still sleeping. The trees and the dark-green fields looked almost as though they were cast in marble. Toward the east a light rose-color was just beginning to thread the sky. M. d'Herblé recalled, with a sweet thrill of remembrance, that he was to meet one dear to him, at an early rendezvous.

In five minutes he was dressed. He descended to the garden, where his great Russian greyhound welcomed him with loud barking and joyful bounds.

"Be quiet, Tiger!" he began, but at last failing to quiet him, he said, "Come then!" and the hound shot like an arrow through the half-opened gate along the familiar road, leaping across the vines till he reached the last cottage of the hamlet, where dwelt Mr. and Mrs. Simons, rich New Yorkers, and their daughter, Miss Edel.

"Will she have awakened?" asked M. d'Herblé of himself. "Is not this an engagement of her own seeking? Yet can it be true that she will come down from her chamber and confide herself to my care, in order that she may assist the sun to rise from the top of the Alaspret Tower?"

For three months he had been flirting with Miss Edel, first in Paris, afterward in the country, where he had persuaded the Simons family to pass the summer, in the hope that there he should have fewer rivals than in the city. No one knew how desperately he loved her, but he was insanely jealous. Rich, noble, and full of fine qualities, he felt sure of pleasing her parents. But would she consent?

There was so much coquetry in her manner, and so

much reserve in her sudden silences that he knew not what to think of her. Sometimes by her peals of laughter and her beautiful and tender looks, she would make him feel as though she favored him; then she would dismiss him with a cold hand-shake, and send him disconcerted back to his place.

One day she had said, pointing with her umbrella-tip toward the Alaspret Tower, which, standing at the top of a mass of rocks, commanded all the country of Caux for ten leagues around, "Is the legend true that the old women of the village tell, that those who are affianced are accustomed to climb together once, to the top of that tower, to watch the sun rise?"

He responded: "It is a local superstition. Engaged couples never fail to observe it. They pretend that, if the sun remains veiled in clouds, the union of the young people will be unhappy; but if the sun shines full and strong, it betokens their future happiness."

She said laughing, "Then, in refusing to shine, the sun has blighted more than one marriage?"

"That occurs but rarely. The promised love continues nine times out of ten. The unbelieving young people deny the augury if it is contrary to their hopes, and accept it only if it is propitious."

"It must be a beautiful spectacle to see the sun rising upon the country. I should love to climb to the top of the tower—truly."

He looked at her with all his soul in his eyes. "Undoubtedly it will be very beautiful to-morrow, mademoiselle."

"Do you believe so? In that case, I will go."

"And will you permit me to accompany you?" stammered he in a trembling voice.

She gave him a steady look full in the face—one of her most proud and inscrutable looks—and answered, "You are free to do so."

It was to that early morning rendezvous that he was going. M. d'Herblé nevertheless doubted her.

"She must be mocking me," thought he. "If by accident she has awakened, she will be laughing behind

her rich Persian curtains at my waiting and my air of discomfort. Ah! if she were not so pretty!"

But a sudden hope made his heart beat violently. He perceived Tiger before the gate of the cottage, his thin body shivering with joy as if he recognized a friend; and almost immediately appeared Miss Edel. She was irreproachably dressed, her golden hair floating on the breeze, beneath her little straw hat; her hands neatly gloved; her feet shod with yellow boots; her costume a delicate mauve suit.

"Good morning," said she. And a similar greeting, uttered in a dry, cold tone, was all that he could express, instead of the warm thanks he desired to offer.

Silently they entered upon the lonely pathway, which led through the woods to the tower,—a damp pathway, exhaling the scent of leaves and grass. A profound silence, tinged with sadness, weighed upon them. It seemed to convey an impression of solitude and emptiness. That, and still more, the unusual hour, brought to the young people a sort of vague melancholy, not without its charm. After going through a grove of reddish pine-trees, scattering resinous needles, they came suddenly to birch-trees and hedges, and some lilac heath flowered the mossy carpet. Then vast rocks appeared, like huge ruins, and they entered upon a steep and serpentine pathway, though the tower was still invisible.

At last, at a turn in the path, it rose before them, lifting high its gray flanks, which were clearly defined against the dull sky. It stood in the midst of ruins, gnawed with mosses, bristling with grasses,—the last feudal remnant of Alaspret Castle.

Miss Edel, breathing hard after her climb, looked toward the East, where the light of Aurora empurpled the sky, and the clouds seemed piled in great, flossy, rose-colored heaps.

"Have we arrived in time?" she asked.

Monsieur d'Herblé nodded his head pensively.

"Ah!" she said indifferently.

A rabbit started beneath their feet in the dew. Tiger, who was frisking about them, saw and gave chase

to it. This diversion amused Miss Edel, most of all when she saw the hound return crest-fallen, the rabbit having quickly hid itself in a hole in the heath.

A few more steps, and they would find themselves at the base of the tower. Hesitating a little before the sinister blackness of the door which opened upon the shadows of the spiral stairway, the young girl looked with a little indecision upon her cavalier.

"Do you truly wish to go to the top? It seems to me that we can see well enough here!"

He gave her a look of reproach. "You are afraid, Miss Edel. Is it not so?"

His words roused her pride, and to show that she feared nothing, not even herself, or the future that the sun would signify to them, she bravely began to climb. D'Herblé followed her respectfully. They climbed a long time in the darkness, exchanging only a word now and then; but at length a great light shone about them. They had reached the platform, where Miss Edel, warm and flushed with her exertions, uttered a cry of delight and wonder as she saw the grand prospect which lay beneath them. An immense circle of hills, of plains, and of woods surrounded them. That triangular pond which they perceived below through the clearing in the valley was the ocean. The forest of Alaspret at the foot of the tower stretched its round, blooming tops as far as the blue ether. The country reminded one of a patched carpet. Those yellow spots here and there were barley; those gray stones, villages; the white specks in the spires were clock dials. A river fringed with willows unrolled its ribbon of silver, hemmed with green. Above all, hovered the gray morning mist. It bathed with a moving wave the Alaspret Tower, as though it were a continent plunged beneath a sea of fog.

The east reddened more and more; the clouds flamed with purple lights, until they looked like gigantic armfuls of wool in the light of a forge. All was silence, mystery, poetry.

Miss Edel and Monsieur d'Herblé thought of the infinite youth and vitality of the earth. How many mill-

ions of similar days had the sun lighted, and yet his beams lost no brightness from century to century! They thought of their own lives, now in their spring-time; the accident which had brought them together, and which no longer seemed accident, but destiny.

A mutual presentiment that their happiness was joined from that moment, penetrated them with an agony of expectation, with an uncontrollable impatience, which was both painful and sweet, to see the burning sun appear.

Because, without daring to say so, in that consummate moment they were afraid,—superstitious regarding those clouds, which would veil perhaps the celestial brazier or entirely extinguish her fiery face.

Immovable, leaning over the battlement, they watched, and the great dog stretched himself beside them.

"Ah!" said the young people suddenly and in perfect unison. The sun glimmered through a rent in the clouds. They scattered so rapidly that they seemed merely a whiff of wind sweeping clean the space below, that the radiant orb might rise in serene glory in a depth of vermilion ether.

"Edel!" sighed D'Herblé, as he saw her more resplendently beautiful than ever in the vivid light.

Her proud expression softened with a touching grace—tears were in her pure eyes.

"See!" she cried, "the heavens are perfectly clear."

Not a cloud was in sight. Columns of smoke, almost invisible, rose from the village roofs. An Angelus tinkled, and was responded to by many bells, delicate and light, like the songs of larks. The birds began to awaken. Life was reviving everywhere. Then, in the golden light of those clear beams, Miss Edel extended her firm little hand toward D'Herblé.

He approached her, and without the slightest resistance upon her part, they exchanged their plighted troth on the Tower of the Levant, in the face of the sun and the world,—entered upon the solemn engagement to belong to each other forever, with a chaste, first kiss.

Mr. Jeremiah Curtin has made several most interesting collections of the folk-lore of different nations, and the following characteristically Irish fairy tale is from his "Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland," and is reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Co., Boston. Mr. Curtin remarks that the Irish myths are much more definite and clear than those of middle and eastern Europe; and he deplores the almost total loss of the fine old Gaelic language in which alone until now most of these curious old tales have been preserved.

THE WEAVER'S SON.

THERE was once a weaver in Erin who lived at the edge of a wood; and on a time when he had nothing to burn, he went out with his daughter to get fagots for the fire.

They gathered two bundles, and were ready to carry them home, when who should come along but a splendid-looking stranger on horseback. And he said to the weaver: "My good man, will you give me that girl of yours?"

"Indeed then I will not," said the weaver.

"I'll give you her weight in gold," said the stranger, and he put out the gold there on the ground.

So the weaver went home with the gold and without the daughter. He buried the gold in the garden, without letting his wife know what he had done. When she asked, "Where is our daughter?" the weaver said: "I sent her on an errand to a neighbor's house for things that I want."

Night came, but no sight of the girl. The next time he went for fagots, the weaver took his second daughter to the wood; and when they had two bundles gathered, and were ready to go home, a second stranger came on horseback, much finer than the first, and asked the weaver if he would give him his daughter.

"I will not," said the weaver.

"Well," said the stranger, "I'll give you her weight

in silver if you'll let her go with me"; and he put the silver down before him.

The weaver carried home the silver and buried it in the garden with the gold, and the daughter went away with the man on horseback.

When he went again to the wood, the weaver took his third daughter with him; and when they were ready to go home, a third man came on horseback, gave the weight of the third daughter in copper, and took her away. The weaver buried the copper with the gold and silver.

Now the wife was lamenting and moaning night and day for her three daughters, and gave the weaver no rest till he told her the whole story.

Now, a son was born to them; and when the boy grew up and was going to school, he heard how his three sisters had been carried away for their weight in gold and silver and copper; and every day when he came home he saw how his mother was lamenting and wandering outside in grief through the fields and pits and ditches, so he asked her what trouble was on her; but she wouldn't tell him a word.

At last he came home crying from school one day, and said: "I'll not sleep three nights in one house till I find my three sisters." Then he said to his mother: "Make me three loaves of bread, mother, for I am going on a journey."

Next day he asked if she had the bread ready. She said she had, and she was crying bitterly all the time. "I'm going to leave you now, mother," said he; "and I'll come back when I have found my three sisters."

He went away, and walked on till he was tired and hungry; and then he sat down to eat the bread that his mother had given him, when a red-haired man came up and asked him for something to eat. "Sit down here," said the boy. He sat down, and the two ate till there was not a crumb of the bread left.

The boy told of the journey he was on; then the red-haired man said: "There may not be much use in your going, but here are three things that'll serve you,—the

sword of sharpness, the cloth of plenty, and the cloak of darkness. No man can kill you while that sword is in your hand; and whenever you are hungry or dry, all you have to do is to spread the cloth and ask for what you'd like to eat or drink, and it will be there before you. When you put on the cloak, there won't be a man or a woman or a living thing in the world that'll see you, and you'll go to whatever place you have set your mind on quicker than any wind."

The red-haired man went his way, and the boy travelled on. Before evening a great shower came and he ran for shelter to a large oak-tree. When he got near the tree his foot slipped, the ground opened, and down he went through the earth till he came to another country. When he was in the other country, he put on the cloak of darkness and went ahead like a blast of wind, and never stopped till he saw a castle in the distance; and soon he was there. But he found nine gates closed before him, and no way to go through. It was written inside the cloak of darkness that his eldest sister lived in that castle.

He was not long at the gate looking in when a girl came to him and said, "Go on out of that; if you don't, you'll be killed."

"Do you go in," said he to the girl, "and tell my sister, the woman of the castle, to come out to me."

The girl ran in; out came the sister, and asked: "Why are you here, and what did you come for?"

"I have come to this country to find my three sisters, who were given away by my father for their weight in gold, silver, and copper; and you are my eldest sister."

She knew from what he said that he was her brother, so she opened the gates and brought him in, saying: "Don't wonder at anything you see in this castle. My husband is enchanted. I see him only at night. He goes off every morning, stays away all day, and comes home in the evening."

The sun went down; and while they were talking, the husband rushed in, and the noise of him was terri-

ble. He came in the form of a ram, ran upstairs, and soon after came down a man.

"Who is this that's with you?" asked he of the wife.

"Oh! that's my brother, who has come from Erin to see me," said she.

Next morning, when the man of the castle was going off in the form of a ram, he turned to the boy and asked, "Will you stay a few days in my castle? You are welcome."

"Nothing would please me better," said the boy; "but I have made a vow never to sleep three nights in one house till I have found my three sisters."

"Well," said the ram, "since you must go, here is something for you." And pulling out a bit of his own wool, he gave it to the boy, saying: "Keep this; and whenever a trouble is on you, take it out, and call on what rams are in the world to help you."

Away went the ram. The boy took farewell of his sister, put on the cloak of darkness, and disappeared. He travelled till hungry and tired, then he sat down, took off the cloak of darkness, spread the cloth of plenty, and asked for meat and drink. After he had eaten and drunk his fill, he took up the cloth, put on the cloak of darkness, and went ahead, passing every wind that was before him, and leaving every wind that was behind.

About an hour before sunset he saw the castle in which his second sister lived. When he reached the gate, a girl came out to him and said: "Go away from that gate, or you'll be killed."

"I'll not leave this till my sister who lives in the castle comes out and speaks to me."

The girl ran in, and out came the sister. When she heard his story and his father's name, she knew that he was her brother, and said: "Come into the castle, but think nothing of what you'll see or hear. I don't see my husband from morning till night. He goes and comes in a strange form, but he is a man at night."

About sunset there was a terrible noise, and in rushed the man of the castle in the form of a tremendous sal-

mon. He went flapping upstairs; but he wasn't long there till he came down a fine-looking man.

"Who is that with you?" asked he of his wife. "I thought you would let no one into the castle while I was gone."

"Oh! this is my brother, who has come to see me," said she.

"If he's your brother, he's welcome," said the man.

They supped, and then slept till morning. When the man of the castle was going out again, in the form of a great salmon, he turned to the boy and said: "You'd better stay here with us a while."

"I cannot," said the boy. "I made a vow never to sleep three nights in one house till I had seen my three sisters. I must go on now and find my third sister."

The salmon then took off a piece of his fin and gave it to the boy, saying: "If any difficulty meets you, or trouble comes on you, call on what salmons are in the sea to come and help you."

They parted. The boy put on his cloak of darkness, and away he went, more swiftly than any wind. He never stopped till he was hungry and thirsty. Then he sat down, took off his cloak of darkness, spread the cloth of plenty, and ate his fill; when he had eaten, he went on again till near sundown, when he saw the castle where his third sister lived. All three castles were near the sea. Neither sister knew what place she was in, and neither knew where the other two were living.

The third sister took her brother in just as the first and second had done, telling him not to wonder at anything he saw.

They were not long inside when a roaring noise was heard, and in came the greatest eagle that ever was seen. The eagle hurried upstairs, and soon came down a man.

"Who is that stranger there with you?" asked he of the wife. (He, as well as the ram and the salmon, knew the boy; he only wanted to try his wife.)

"This is my brother, who has come to see me."

They all took supper and slept that night. When the

eagle was going away in the morning, he pulled a feather out of his wing, and said to the boy: "Keep this; it may serve you. If you are ever in straits and want help, call on what eagles are in the world and they'll come to you."

There was no hurry now, for the third sister was found; and the boy went upstairs with her to examine the country all around, and to look at the sea. Soon he saw a great white hill, and on the top of the hill a castle.

"In that castle on the white hill beyond," said the sister, "lives a giant, who stole from her home the most beautiful young woman in the world. From all parts the greatest heroes and champions and kings' sons are coming to take her away from the giant and marry her. There is not a man of them all who is able to conquer the giant and free the young woman; but the giant conquers them, cuts their heads off, and then eats their flesh. When he has picked the bones clean, he throws them out; and the whole place around the castle is white with the bones of the men that the giant has eaten."

"I must go," said the boy, "to that castle to know if I can kill the giant and bring away the young woman."

So he took leave of his sister, put on the cloak of darkness, took his sword with him, and was soon inside the castle. The giant was fighting with champions outside. When the boy saw the young woman, he took off the cloak of darkness and spoke to her.

"Oh!" said she, "what can you do against the giant? No man has ever come to this castle without losing his life. The giant kills every man; and no one has ever come here so big that the giant did not eat him at one meal."

"And is there no way to kill him?" asked the boy.

"I think not," said she.

"Well, if you'll give me something to eat, I'll stay here; and when the giant comes in, I'll do my best to kill him. But don't let on that I am here."

Then he put on the cloak of darkness, and no one could see him. When the giant came in, he had the

bodies of two men on his back. He threw down the bodies, and told the young woman to get them ready for his dinner. Then he snuffed around, and said: "There's some one here; I smell the blood of an Erineach."

"I don't think you do," said the young woman; "I can't see any one."

"Neither can I," said the giant; "but I smell a man."

With that the boy drew his sword; and when the giant was struck, he ran in the direction of the blow to give one back; then he was struck on the other side.

They were at one another this way, the giant and the boy with the cloak of darkness on him, till the giant had fifty wounds, and was covered with blood. Every minute he was getting a slash of a sword, but never could give one back. At last he called out: "Whoever you are, wait till to-morrow, and I'll face you then."

So the fighting stopped; and the young woman began to cry and lament as if her heart would break when she saw the state the giant was in. "Oh! you'll be with me no longer; you'll be killed now; what can I do alone without you?" and she tried to please him, and washed his wounds.

"Don't be afraid," said the giant; "this one, whoever he is, will not kill me, for there is no man in the world that can kill me." Then the giant went to bed, and was well in the morning.

Next day the giant and the boy began in the middle of the forenoon, and fought till the middle of the afternoon. The giant was covered with wounds, and he had not given one blow to the boy, and could not see him, for he was always in his cloak of darkness; so the giant had to ask for rest till next morning.

While the young woman was washing and dressing the wounds of the giant, she cried and lamented all the time, saying: "What'll become of me now? I'm afraid you'll be killed this time; and how can I live here without you?"

"Have no fear for me," said the giant; "I'll put your mind at rest. In the bottom of the sea is a chest locked and bound, in that chest is a duck, in that duck

an egg; and I never can be killed unless some one gets the egg from the duck in the chest at the bottom of the sea, and rubs it on the mole that is under my right breast."

While the giant was telling this to the woman to put her mind at rest, who should be listening to the story but the boy in the cloak of darkness. The minute he heard of the chest in the sea, he thought of the salmons. So off he hurried to the seashore, which was not far away. Then he took out the fin that his second sister's husband had given him, and called on what salmons were in the sea to bring up the chest with the duck inside, and put it on the beach before him.

He had not long to wait till he saw nothing but salmon,—the whole sea was covered with them, moving to land; and they put the chest out on the beach before him.

But the chest was locked and strong; how could he open it? He thought of the rams; and taking out the lock of wool, said: "I want what rams are in the world to come and break open this chest!"

That minute the rams of the world were running to the seashore, each with a terrible pair of horns on him; and soon they battered the chest to splinters. Out flew the duck, and away she went over the sea.

The boy took out the feather, and said: "I want what eagles are in the world to get me the egg from that duck."

That minute the duck was surrounded by the eagles of the world and the egg was soon brought to the boy. He put the feather, the wool, and the fin in his pocket, put on the cloak of darkness, and went to the castle on the white hill, and told the young woman, when she was dressing the wounds of the giant again, to raise up his arm.

Next day they fought till the middle of the afternoon. The giant was almost cut to pieces, and called for a cessation.

The young woman hurried to dress the wounds, and he said: "I see you would help me if you could; you

are not able. But never fear, I shall not be killed." Then she raised his arm to wash away the blood, and the boy, who was there in his cloak of darkness, struck the mole with the egg. The giant died that minute.

The boy took the young woman to the castle of his third sister. Next day he went back for the treasures of the giant, and there was more gold in the castle than one horse could draw.

They spent nine days in the castle of the eagle with the third sister. Then the boy gave back the feather, and the two went on till they came to the castle of the salmon, where they spent nine more days with the second sister; and he gave back the fin.

When they came to the castle of the ram, they spent fifteen days with the first sister, and had great feasting and enjoyment. Then the boy gave back the lock of wool to the ram, and taking farewell of his sister and her husband, set out for home with the young woman of the white castle, who was now his wife, bringing presents from the three daughters to their father and mother.

At last they reached the opening near the tree, came up through the ground, and went on to where he had met the red-haired man. Then he spread the cloth of plenty, asked for very good meat and drink, and called the red-haired man. He came. The three sat down, ate and drank with enjoyment.

When they had finished, the boy gave back to the red-haired man the cloak of darkness, the sword of sharpness, and the cloth of plenty, and thanked him.

"You were kind to me," said the red-haired man; "you gave me of your bread when I asked it, and told me where you were going. I took pity on you; for I knew you never could get what you wanted unless I helped you. I am the brother of the eagle, the salmon, and the ram."

They parted. The boy went home, built a castle with the treasure of the giant, and lived happily with his parents and wife.

ROMANCE.

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The profound and lofty moral of this touching sketch, by Björnstjerne Björnson, gives it a poetic dignity, rare in so simple a tale: but Björnson is first and always a poet. The sketch is translated by Carl Larsen.

THE FATHER.

THORD OVERAAS, of whom we are about to speak, was the wealthiest man in the parish.

His tall figure stood one day in the pastor's study. "I have got a son," he said eagerly, "and I wish to have him baptized."

"What shall he be called?"

"Finn, after my father."

"And his god-parents?"

They were named, being relatives of Thord and the best men and women in the district.

"Is there anything else?" asked the pastor, and looked up.

The farmer stood a minute.

"I should like to have him baptized by himself," he said.

"That is to say, on a week-day?"

"Next Saturday, at twelve o'clock."

"Is there anything else?"

"Nothing else."

The farmer took his hat and moved to go.

Then the pastor rose. "There is still this," he said, and going up to Thord, he took his hand and looked him in the face: "God grant that the child may be a blessing to you!"

Sixteen years after that day, Thord stood again in the pastor's study.

"You look exceedingly well, Thord," said the pastor: he saw no change in him.

"I have no trouble," replied Thord.

The pastor was silent, but in a moment he asked: "What is your errand to-night?"

"I have come to-night about my son, who is to be confirmed to-morrow."

"He is a clever lad."

"I did not wish to pay the pastor before I heard how many were to be confirmed. I have heard that,—and here are ten dollars for the pastor."

"Is there anything else?" asked the pastor, looking at Thord.

"Nothing else." And Thord went away.

Eight years more passed by, and one day the pastor heard a noise without his door, for many men were there, and Thord first among them. The pastor looked up and recognized him.

"You come with a powerful escort to-night."

"I have come to request that the banns may be published for my son: he is to be married to Karen Storliden, daughter of Gudmund, who is here with me."

"That is to say, to the richest girl in the parish."

"They say so," replied the farmer, stroking his hair with one hand.

The pastor sat a minute, as if in thought: he said nothing, but entered the names in his books, and the men wrote under them.

Thord laid three dollars on the table.

"I should have only one," said the pastor.

"I know that perfectly, but he is my only child. I will do the thing well."

The pastor took up the money. "This is the third time now, Thord, that you stand here on your son's account," he said.

"But now I am done with him," said Thord. Taking up his pocket-book, he said good-night, and went.

Just a fortnight after this, the father and son were rowing over the lake in still weather to Storliden, to arrange about the wedding.

"The cushion is not straight," said the son: he rose to put it right. At the same moment his foot slipped: he stretched out his arms, and with a cry fell into the water.

"Catch hold of the oar!" called the father: he stood

up and stuck it out. But when the son had made a few attempts, he became stiff.

"Wait a minute!" cried the father, and began to row.

Then the son turned over backward, gazed earnestly at his father, and sank.

Thord could scarcely believe it to be true: he kept the boat still, and stared at the spot where his son had sunk, as though he would come up again. A few bubbles rose up, a few more, then one great one: it burst—and the sea again lay bright as a mirror.

For three days and three nights the father was seen to row round and round the spot, without either food or sleep: he was seeking for his son. On the morning of the third day he found him, and carried him up over the hills to his farm.

It was about a year afterward when the pastor, one autumn evening, heard something rustling outside the door in the passage, and fumbling about the lock. The door opened, and in walked a tall, thin man, with bent figure and white hair. The pastor looked long at him before he recognized him: it was Thord.

"Why do you come so late?" asked the pastor.

"Why, yes, I do come late," said Thord: he seated himself. The pastor sat down also, as though waiting: there was a long silence.

Then said Thord, "I have something with me that I wish to give to the poor." He rose, laid some money on the table, and sat down again.

The pastor counted it. "It is a great deal of money," he said.

"It is the half of my farm, which I have sold to-day."

The pastor remained long sitting in silence: at last he asked, but gently: "What do you intend to do now?"

"Something better."

They sat there awhile, Thord with downcast eyes, the pastor with his raised to Thord. Then the pastor said slowly, and in a low tone: "I think at last your son has really become a blessing to you."

"Yes, I think so myself also," said Thord: he looked up, and two tears coursed slowly down his face.

Miss Letty, in the following story by Lady Lindsay of Balcarras (from *Temple Bar*), seems to have been perfectly sincere in her aversion to her cousin Tom. Every swain who is treated with cold contempt by the idol of his heart should read of the singular metamorphosis which befell this young woman.

A LONG DAY.

"It will be such a very long day, auntie."

"That depends altogether on yourself, Letty."

"I am perfectly certain that it must inevitably be the very longest day in all my life."

"Well, well; you know best. At any rate you are provided with books, flowers, a piano, and a new frock —all that young ladyhood most ardently desires, I suppose. And you needn't see anything of Tom."

"How can I help it?"

"Go into the garden when he is in the house; go into the house when he is in the garden. Shut the door of the drawing-room in his face (he is not likely to trespass in your domain, though); have your luncheon sent in to you on a tray if you require absolute seclusion. I can think of nothing more at this moment."

"Oh, dear, it will be such a long, long day, auntie."

"So you said before. Well, I am truly sorry. 'What can't be cured must be endured,' you know. Good-by, child."

My aunt thereupon folded me in a voluminous embrace, and mounted up into the fly, a musty and antique vehicle which had been hired from the neighboring town to convey her and her dozen packages to the station. My aunt, a maiden lady of mature years and energetic habits, was going to spend the day with another maiden lady of mature years, her sister, who lived at E——, preferring the gay vortex of a cathedral town to the simple pleasures of the country.

"Where's the basket of cowslips, Letty, and the bacon? And, oh, the cream!"

"It's all right, auntie; cream and bacon and all. But, dear me, dear me, how I wish the day were over!"

"Never mind that, you foolish girl; it's positively wicked. And you might change your mind after all, before evening."

"Oh! no, indeed."

"Well, good-by, again; good-by."

The driver clicked his whip, the old horse started, the fly gave sundry creaks and lurches, my aunt waved her handkerchief, and I was left, standing lonely on the doorstep, while the departing vehicle meandered slowly between the trees, and was presently lost to sight.

Then I turned to go indoors, revolving in my thoughts how I could best avoid Tom. But ere I could solve the difficult problem, a loud, rough voice called out from the shrubbery:

"Hullo, Cousin Lettice, why I'm just a minute too late, ain't I? She's off, ain't she?"

"Aunt Mab has just gone," I replied with chilly dignity. Tom in his brief speech had already offended me twice. I did not like to be called Lettice; I could not endure the word "ain't."

However, he emerged from the shrubbery as unconcerned and cheerful as usual, and came up to where I stood. He was dressed in white flannel from head to foot, and was lazily swinging his long arms to and fro.

"I say, Cousin Lettice, come and play tennis."

"Thank you, Tom; I am busy, and would you please kindly remember to call me Letitia?"

"Certainly, certainly.

> "My dearest love, I could not wish her
> A name more charming than Letitia.

"Or shall I call you Tishy?

> "Little Miss Tishy
> Her conduct was fishy."

"Tom!"

"Yes, Letitia."

"I am going in, and—and—I shall be extremely busy all day."

"Oh, indeed! Well, so shall I; too busy to talk to you, Miss Tishy. I know how to take a hint as well as anybody, believe me."

So saying, and with a very red face, Tom strode away, whistling "La-di-da" as he went.

What a bumpkin he was, to be sure, and what aggressively and irritatingly vulgar manners some unkind fairy godmother had bestowed on him! It was all very well that he pretended to study Latin and Greek while he spent the summer with Aunt Mab; he was far more likely to take a double first-class in boating or cricketing, or become a senior wrangler with a fishing-rod, than to excel in any purely mental struggle. As for myself, I was a young Londoner on a fortnight's visit to Aunt Mab, and a garden-party at Fulham or Chiswick (with plenty of strawberries and cream, a couple of laburnum trees and the Hungarian band) realized a notion of the country far more than this silent nook in the wilds of Devonshire, in which, however, I had already spent ten idle days, wandering about with my aunt, making uneatable cheeses under the supercilious direction of the dairymaid, and perpetually squabbling with Cousin Tom.

Tom had walked away now, whistling and aggrieved, and I went indoors, and opened the piano, and practised a nocturne by Chopin. I could hear Tom in his study, stamping up and down, and banging the door of his bookcase. Then all was still, and I knew he had settled down to read; but I practised diligently, for I reflected that music might annoy him, and interfere with his meditations on Horace or Euripides.

I distinctly hated Tom; I must have done so, for I often longed to do him an injury. It only irritated me to see that Aunt Mab liked him, and that the vicar, the housekeeper, the dogs and cats, and all the dirty little village children loved and idolized him. But, of course, in a sleepy and benighted village there is nobody for

anybody else to like, and the one young man in the place must needs grow spoiled and overbearing.

An hour had passed, and my fingers grew tired, and my head heavy. Had Tom been anyone but Tom, I should have almost regretted my refusal of his offer of lawn-tennis. Lawn-tennis! the very word was refreshing, and suggested pleasant pastime and good fellowship. I left the piano and turned to the open window; the garden was cool and green, the room was close and decidedly dreary. Finally I sallied forth, my complexion protected by the shady hat and gauze veil that Londoners deem necessary for rural life, and carrying in a basket the latest invention of yellow-brown art needlework, intending to spend a pleasant hour in the shade.

But I had not gone a dozen yards before I came upon Tom, partly asleep, his legs and arms stretched over half-a-dozen chairs, two Latin books and a big dictionary lying on the gravel path, and the last number of *Punch* spread open on his knee.

"Oh dear, I am afraid I have disturbed you," said I.

"Not in the least," answered Tom benignantly.

"I thought you were in your study."

"So I was, but the infernal noise of your piano——"

"I forgot you are not fond of music."

"On the contrary, I love music. It was music that drove me out of the house, and caused me to find this deliciously calm retreat. Have a chair?"

"No, thank you; I am going in."

"What, when you have only just come out? How restless you are! You had better sit down."

"Why should I?"

"It is your duty to entertain me."

"My duty, indeed!"

"Did not Aunt Mab bid you do so? No? Well, anyhow, she told me to entertain you, Cousin Lettice."

"She told you?"

"Certainly. 'Tom, dear boy' (Aunt Mab always calls me dear boy)—'Tom, my dear boy, you are bucolic, and Lettice isn't anything of the sort. She must tame you.'"

"Aunt Mab never spoke like that."

"She did; to that effect, at least. And she added: 'Tom, dear old man, it's your manifest duty to be tamed.'"

"Oh, Cousin Tom!"

"Oh, Cousin Lettice (Letitia, I mean), I do so want to be tamed!"

But Tom, as he made this apparently humble speech, looked up with so defiant and impertinent an expression on his countenance, that I turned angrily from him and walked quickly and in silence across the lawn toward the house. As I went, I heard a peal of derisive laughter, and I knew that Tom was mocking me. Oh, how I hated Tom!

I meditated on revenge, however, and when the luncheon hour approached, I determined to follow out my aunt's suggestion, and therefore I gave orders that I should be served on a tray in the drawing-room. Five minutes after I had given the order, there came a knock at the door, and Tom walked in.

"You are ill," he said abruptly.

"Not at all."

"What is the matter then?"

"May I not wish to be alone?"

"Oh, certainly."

As red as fire, Tom retraced his steps, but, equally suddenly, he changed his intention, and recrossed the room rapidly to where I sat.

"This is all nonsense, Letty. You are really ill."

"I am not ill."

"Either you are ill, or you must be able to walk into the dining-room. I shall send for a doctor at once."

"You will do no such thing, Tom; I will not have it."

"I shall do what I think necessary. In my aunt's absence I am the only responsible person in the house."

"You are not my keeper."

"I am so long as you require one, and when there is no better person to watch over you. Come, Letty, don't be silly. Let me feel your pulse."

"I will not; I am perfectly well, I assure you."

"Then you have been humbugging."

"I don't know what you call 'humbugging.'"

"Letty, Letty! But these are London manners, I suppose, or what people used to call the vapors."

"In the time of Queen Elizabeth?"

"No, later than Elizabeth. Now come to lunch."

"I will not."

"You will not? Why, you can say nothing else! and you are half crying! These are hysterical symptoms; I must certainly send for a doctor."

Tom sat down at the table, squared his elbows, and proceeded to indite in a large, bold hand the words: "My dear sir."

He wrote no more; unable to contain my rage and indignation, I seized the sheet of notepaper on which he had begun to write, and, crumpling it up in my trembling hands, I threw it violently in his face.

He rose up quickly, and stared at me.

"The devil!" he began, and then, with sudden coldness—"I think you are quite right not to come into the dining-room, Cousin Lettice," he said, and thereupon he stalked out, and banged the door.

I burst into a passion of tears. Anger, shame and humiliation were swelling my heart. Suddenly I dried my tears. Had not Tom, so to speak, forbidden my presence in the dining-room? Without pausing, even to smooth my disordered hair, I rushed into the room where luncheon had been served, and where the substantial repast still graced the table, though Tom's folded napkin and unused knife and fork bore evidence to the fact that he had not yet eaten. Nor did he apparently intend to do so, for through the open window came the sound of a strident voice that said:

"Put Jerry in the dog-cart directly, Wilkins; I am going to drive into Eddiscombe."

I had rather have died than have owned to it, and yet I felt myself vanquished. Tom was a rough countryman, and I was a civilized London girl; he was, of course, unused to the ways and wiles of women, while at balls and kettledrums I had boasted many a conquest.

Somehow, however, I could not manage Tom; I could not even prevent his managing me. Furthermore, a sense of depression actually came over me at the thought of his going out for the afternoon; surely, in Aunt Mab's absence, it was his bounden duty to be my squire—nay, my slave.

I ate my luncheon, however, as I was very hungry, and I sat on feeling cross and lonely, moodily sipping my aunt's home-made ginger beer with the melancholy reflection that it was not more flat than all the world besides to me, this long, long day, of all my days the flattest.

Suddenly the door burst open.

"Down, Sambo; down, down, Chloe," quoth my cousin to the big dogs that accompanied him, barking vociferously, and jumping on him with delight.

"I say, Letty (Letitia, I mean), I've ordered the old trap round. I'm going to drive you to Eddiscombe."

"You are?"

"I'm sorry, you know," began Tom in a bungling sort of way, "that I—I—I lost my temper, but I couldn't help it."

"You were extremely rude," I answered with dignity.

"And you? What were you?" asked Tom with a laugh. "You'd better accept my apology with grace, Letty, before my humility dies out altogether. It's safe not to last long. Go and put on your hat and tippet."

"My what?"

"Your bonnet and cloak, if you like that better. Of course, Tishy, I know that it is simply idiotic for a man to lose his temper with a woman."

"That is true."

"A woman may do what she likes; it is all silly childishness, like the scratching of a kitten, or the anger of a young canary! A man shouldn't mind, if he is anything of a fellow, and, of course, he doesn't mind really."

"My dear Tom," I asked with some sarcasm, "why do you seek my society if I am so silly?"

"Why do you seek mine?" retorted Tom quickly.

"Why did you come into the dining-room, Miss Letty?"

"I—I didn't seek——"

"Oh, yes, you did. Well, you are a dreary, lonely child, and—don't contradict, Tishy—and I pity you and want to cheer you up. Besides, you are not bad-looking, though you are my cousin. There's soft sawder for you! Why, you have been taught in books, Letitia, that woman's beauty is the mainspring of men's great deeds. What a poor little weak hand it is!" added Tom incoherently, taking my feeble member into his large bronzed palm.

"I don't want it kissed, though," said I, angrily snatching it away just in time to avert the catastrophe. "How dare you, Tom!"

"'I dare do all that may become a man,'" replied Tom grandiloquently. "Do go and dress, Letty. Better a drive with a cousin and the bitter herb of tobacco than a dull afternoon and only the stalled ox of cold beef to comfort you."

"Who is silly now? But you have eaten no cold beef yourself."

"I stuffed myself with a late breakfast. Besides, you are like a saintly vision—I see you better when I am fasting. Down, Sambo, down, sir. Now sit up and beg; of course you must put on your best manners, like your master, for the sake of this fine lady from London!"

My aunt's dog-cart was a vehicle in which she would never trust herself, and which was therefore kept solely for the use of Tom. As for Jerry, she was a good, quiet beast. Her name was originally Egeria, but the stable-boy had contracted and vulgarized this appellation, much as the Aryan races have amalgamated the noble Sanskrit roots into their divers modern tongues.

Jerry trotted on affably, and my cousin, as we passed between the high hedges that wore the green mantle of spring, discoursed with erudition of the neighborhood.

"So you see, Lettice," said Tom, for the fifth or sixth time, "that, when the old squire died, he had got all

his property comfortably packed into a ring fence, and when his first wife's stepdaughter succeeded to her great-aunt, who, as I told you, was the squire's second cousin, once removed—why, Letitia, I do believe you are nearly asleep; you were actually nodding!"

"You are so—so entertaining, Tom. How pretty the wild violets are!"

"Dog violets, you mean."

"I don't choose to call them so."

"As you please. A violet or a lettuce by any other name—Letty, I want to ask you one thing."

"Well?"

"Why are you so contradictious and quarrelsome?"

"I never was called quarrelsome before, Tom. I never am quarrelsome, except, perhaps——"

"When you are with me. I understand. Well, I have a fellow-feeling. You rub me up uncommonly."

"And you annoy me constantly."

"I get angry with you perpetually."

"I dislike you positively. Really, dear Tom, you don't mind my speaking the truth?"

"Not in the least; it relieves my mind. Do you know, I have often felt quite alarmed at the strength of my aversion for you."

"It cannot exceed mine for you."

"Well," said Tom with a half sigh, "this is the first subject we have ever agreed on. Let us be satisfied, Tishy, to think that we can agree in something."

Strangely enough, however, no woman wishes to be disliked, even by the object of her own detestation.

"I wonder why you dislike me, Tom," I asked after a pause. It was foolish of me to ask, for of course Tom would answer in his usual bantering way. But no, he spoke slowly and almost softly:

"I don't know, Tishy. It is owing to some intricate law of moral repulsion, I suppose—a sort of natural antipathy, the absolute reverse of elective affinity, in fact.

'I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell.'

But why do you dislike me, Letitia?"

"Oh, because you are rough and rude, and bearish and obstinate, and generally vexatious and detestable," I answered with energy.

Tom laughed. His momentary softness had evidently departed. He pushed back from his brown forehead the woollen Tam o' Shanter that imprisoned his crisp, curly locks; he turned an amused glance toward me, and then he hugged himself and laughed in the absurd boisterous manner that was peculiarly his own, displaying two rows of strong white teeth, the most perfect, surely, in all the world.

"Here, hold the reins, cousin mine, and I will relieve you of my detestable company for a bit." He flung himself out of the dog-cart as he spoke, and proceeded to walk up the steep hill. Tom was singularly active and lithe; also he had a noble bearing. At the present time, he was clad in the most disgracefully old and badly-made clothes it was possible to wear; his short rough coat was ragged and ill-fitting, the sleeves and collar of his shirt were frayed at the edges, but there was an air, almost a majesty of grace, about him that would have befitted a paladin of romance, and that was plainly visible despite his garb. As he strode on, his big sunburnt hand resting on the mare's shaggy mane, whistling as he went for very lightheartedness and joy of life, I could not help wondering why I disliked Tom so much, and whether indeed it were possible to reconcile a thorough hatred of our cousins with a certain curious pleasure in their society. I wished that I could put my meditations into words, for Tom's benefit. Surely there was such a thing as progression by antagonism. What a pity, thought I, that women are so weak at definition and argument!

In the very midst of my metaphysical wonderings, Tom looked carelessly back over his shoulder, and my eyes met his.

He laughed, he absolutely laughed again, a contemptuous mocking laugh that jarred upon my feelings. With a look of withering scorn I leaned back in my seat and devoted myself altogether to the contempla-

tion of the scenery around us. It was very lovely; we were nearing Eddiscombe, a quaint little town embowered in trees, overlooking a narrow stretch of inland sea. The gray roofs shone in the sun, a thousand dancing lights gleamed in the rippling water; an orchard, full of rosy, blossoming trees, lay on our right hand; to the left, undulating green hills and slopes, while far beyond was the breezy moorland, and on the horizon some brown sails of fishing boats came skimming along the narrow blue line that was the open sea.

"Pretty, ain't it?" asked Tom. "There's no place like England, no place like home, Lettice, after all."

"But if you have never travelled, Tom?"

"That's the very reason why," he replied, somewhat enigmatically, and leaping lightly into the dog-cart, he gave the bridle-reins a shake, and we set off at a swinging trot.

There are few things more delightful to my mind than passing quickly through the air, perched on the top of a high vehicle, the guidance of which is intrusted to a steady hand. It is charming to close the eyes and dream, secure and comfortably at ease, though the sense of swiftness almost catches the breath.

Some time had gone by thus peacefully when I said, "How pleasant this is, Tom!"

But, even while I spoke there was a sudden strange sound as though something in the rickety harness had given way, and a black object swayed for a moment to and fro about the mare's neck, close to her ears. The animal was frightened, doubtless, for our speed increased tenfold, and the old dog-cart lurched and swung from side to side.

"Oh, Tom, not so fast, not so fast!" I cried.

"Hush!" said Tom under his breath.

I stared at him, a vague dread chilling my heart. He was sitting bolt upright; nay, he was half standing. His lips, partly open, showed his tightly-clenched teeth; his eyes were fixed, and he was frowning terribly. His strong hands held the reins in their powerful grasp, but

the ribbons were strained, and seemed almost about to break asunder.

And then I knew that Jerry was running away, and that we were in danger.

I laid my hand upon the reins. "Oh, Tom, let me help," I whispered. But Tom shook off my hand with no gentle movement.

"Good God!" he said fiercely, "let me alone, will you? Sit still—yes, you shall! Do as I tell you; do you hear?"

He glared at me for a moment; his blue eyes flashed like steel, and his face was quite white; I had never dreamed that Tom could look thus. I sat perfectly still, not altogether from obedience to Tom, of course, but from a wish to help him, as well as from the consciousness that it was best to do so. Faster and faster grew Jerry's speed; my head swam as the landscape seemed to fly past, and we dashed on, sometimes spinning recklessly along the road, sometimes jolting and lurching dangerously over stones and rough places.

Suddenly Tom turned to me. "Letty, you will promise to remain still, whatever happens?" he murmured hurriedly.

"Yes, yes; why?"

Tom gave no answer, but the next moment the dog cart swerved violently, the mare seemed about to climb a steep bank, and I was scarcely conscious of anything more, except an overwhelming surging sound in my ears.

Then directly after, as it appeared to me, I found myself unaccountably sitting on the soft grass, with Tom's arms round my neck, and Tom's frightened eyes staring into mine.

"Oh, Letty, you are a real angel!" said Tom incoherently.

I could not speak; I thought I was dreaming; I put my hand to my head. I was hardly aware of my own identity; it never occurred to me even to be angry at Tom's affectionate attitude. And yet it was all true; the dog-cart and the mare had vanished, and I, weak

and giddy, was sitting by the roadside, leaning against this meekest and contritest of cousins.

"Oh, Letty," said Tom, in a voice that was absolutely low and husky, "can you forgive me? Oh, Letty, my darling, I nearly killed you. When we were shot out of that beastly trap, and I picked you up, you had fainted, and I thought you were dead. But you are all right, ain't you? Say you are all right, Letty."

There were two big tears in Tom's kind eyes as he gazed anxiously at me. I was all right, so right, indeed, that I am convinced my strongest feeling at that particular moment was one of triumph that fate and I together had reduced Tom to such an abject condition. Possibly he discerned something of the kind in my telltale face, for he smiled and breathed a sigh of relief.

And then he blushed deep red through his brown skin.

"Letty, give me a kiss, just one kiss."

"Why? Oh, Tom, I can't, I can't."

"Yes, you can, just one; because you hate me," said Tom illogically, and so, without waiting my permission, he took me in his big, strong arms and held me. And a strange and sudden knowledge came to me that our hate was not hate after all, but only love in disguise. For indeed, from time immemorial, mythical and historical, has not the foolish young god been prone to disguise? As we sat hand in hand, gazing at each other, there was no need for speech, and Tom and I were both silently agreed that we had loved each other all our lives.

But at last he spoke: "Letty, do you remember the first time I ever saw you?"

"Yes; it was at grandpapa's house at Twickenham. We were a party of children playing together, and a horrid little boy wanted to put some earwigs down my back, and you wouldn't let him."

"I gave him a jolly thrashing and made him eat one of his own earwigs. And the second time I saw you, Letty, you cried because I made you sit in a cherry tree and wouldn't allow you to come down until you had eaten the cherries I had picked for you."

"And my French governess cried also, and said you had a bad heart."

"So she did. Well, the third time we met, you were grown up and wouldn't speak to me at all, so it was my turn to be in Coventry."

"And how about Jerry?" I asked after a pause.

"She is in the sand-pit, probably. I tried to upset the trap to save us from worse destruction. I didn't know exactly what to do," added Tom ingenuously. "But the old mare disapproved of my plans, and spilt us, and went on her way rejoicing."

"Oh, Tom!"

"So now you must walk home, Letty. Or stay, let us go as far as that white farmhouse. It will do you good to rest a bit, anyhow."

We walked awhile, and then, at a turn in the road, we came upon Jerry, quietly grazing by the hedge, the broken reins hanging loosely about her neck, and the old dog-cart, scarcely injured, still at her heels. She allowed Tom to go up to her and stroke her neck and examine her hocks and fetlocks with a learned hand and lead her (for she was not in the least hurt) in the direction of the farm.

Then Tom, who was a master in such work, unharnessed Jerry and took her round to the stables, tended her and washed her, and mended the dog-cart with sundry ropes and bits of wood, thereby earning the unbounded admiration and respect of half-a-dozen loutish laborers, while I sat in the good wife's parlor, drinking tea and endeavoring to ascertain the exact ages of her nine children.

It was late afternoon, almost evening, when Tom and I set out on our homeward drive. The aspect of the landscape had altogether changed. The sun, though not yet set, was hidden behind a bank of shining clouds; the quiet sea lay like burnished silver in the distance. The greenness of the earth seemed to have given place to subtle and harmonious tones of gray, and over our happy spirits had fallen a radiant veil of silent, calm delight that was somewhat similar.

Tom drove slowly; every now and then he turned toward me his joyous, loving eyes, and I stole my hand gently into his.

It was dark when we reached home. Aunt Mab was in an agony of kindly solicitude, anxiously expecting us.

"Why, Letty—why, my dear, how late you are!"

"Oh, no, it is not late, auntie, surely."

"But it is. And you have had such a long day, you poor dear! and you have been with Tom after all. Why, I was positively afraid something had happened. Has he been very rude, my dear, and bothered you very much?"

"Oh, Aunt Mab, Tom is never really rude!"

"Well, I don't know; you said so yourself, sometimes. But, never mind, the longest day comes to an end, child."

"Dear Aunt Mab, it has been a lovely day! I am so sorry it is over."

My aunt stared at me with undisguised amazement. "Have you lost your senses, child?"

"She did at one time," said Tom composedly. "But she has found them now." And then he laughed, a happy and very loud laugh that somehow did not jar upon my nerves in the very least, and then he seized hold of Aunt Mab by both her hands and hugged her rapturously.

"The truth is, Letty and I are going to be married, and so we mean to spend ever so many long days together.

"Well," said Aunt Mab, as soon as she had regained her breath, "people do say that it is well to begin with a little aversion."

"But it was the dog-cart," I pleaded incoherently.

"Ah, I see," said Aunt Mab, nodding her head.

But she did not see, quite. For none but Tom and I could possibly know how happy we were at that time, and what is more, none can know how truly and intensely happy we have been since then. We never quarrel now—never; I think we got through all our

quarrelling beforehand. Some folks get tired of their love-making before long, but we have still a great deal of that in the future, I trust. We have bought a new dog-cart, and when Tom and I go contentedly driving up and down the steep Devonshire lanes, Aunt Mab smiles and calls us Darby and Joan. And sometimes, when Tom is in a quiet and poetic mood (which doesn't happen very often, by the by), I whisper to him softly, as I lean my face against his broad shoulder:

"Dear Tom, let us pray that we may live long, long years together, and then at last I shall say to you:

'John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.'"

Inconsolable lovers, whom untoward fortune has deprived of their sweethearts, are advised to read this story carefully. It is also commended to the attention of those who insist that only great events are dictated by Providence. The course of many lives was altered here by a tiny toy, as the cackle of geese or the secreting of a file has decided the destiny of a nation. "The Black Marble" is an adaptation, after the Danish, by Peter Toft, and is published by permission of the Century Company.

THE BLACK MARBLE.

In the waiting-room at Brussels, as I was starting for Paris I encountered a countryman, who saluted me as an acquaintance, and inquired if I had seen a mutual friend, Captain N., who, he had been told, was also in Brussels. I knew the Captain very well, but the questioner appeared to me an entire stranger; he seemed, however, so convinced of my knowing him that I felt it would be impolite to let him suspect the contrary; and as I was conscious that one of my failings was a weak recollection of stray acquaintances, I put a good face on the matter, and made believe that the recognition was mutual.

He was quite a handsome man, apparently about thirty years old. A well-cared-for beard, a pair of fine vaulted eyebrows, and an abundant head of black hair, with a transparent complexion and features more regular than expressive, rendered him indeed rather too handsome. His form also was faultless, and his dress well calculated to make this fact the more evident. In spite of the oppressive warmth of the weather, he wore a close-fitting, tight-buttoned frock-coat, which displayed conspicuously the rounded contour of a military exquisite.

"You, too, are bound for Paris?" I asked as we stepped out on the platform.

"Yes, and farther—to Algiers," he answered; and immediately added, "I ought to have gone ten years ago, you would probably say. Yes, indeed, it is some-

what late to begin anew, but better late than never;—let us get into that smoking-carriage yonder; there are only two passengers in it."

Accordingly we entered the carriage. It contained, as my companion had observed, but two passengers besides ourselves. One of them looked like a cockney on his first excursion; he kept his eyes continually on a red-covered guide-book, probably Bædeker's *Paris;* the other, seemingly a gentleman in the early thirties, was equipped as a regular tourist.

"We shall have things here all to ourselves," remarked my handsome companion, half-aloud, with perfect confidence in the unintelligibility of the Danish language to foreigners. "They are likely a couple of dumb beef-eaters who have ensconced themselves yonder."

Though the remark was neither very amiable nor encouraging, it caused instantly an expression of joy to beam over the face of one of the supposed Englishmen.

"Countrymen, I believe," he exclaimed, smiling; "indeed, they are the first Danish words I have heard for many years."

"Then I regret exceedingly," said my companion, "that they were not better chosen."

"No matter," replied the other. "Over in Paraguay once I embraced an old salt because he cursed me in my mother-tongue. You may believe that when one has been long abroad, and suddenly hears his native language, the mere sound and melody is enough, no matter what the particular phrase may be."

Such was the beginning of our acquaintance, and in the space of a quarter-of-an-hour our conversation was carried on in a tone as open and frank as if we had been intimate friends of many years' standing.

Our last acquaintance contributed a large quota to our lively talk. He was a thorough contrast to my first, being far from handsome, with large features, bushy eyebrows, and a high forehead. His complexion was dark —burnt by sun and wind. A number of bluish stains on one of his cheeks proved that he had literally been scorched by fire; in short, his whole exterior indicated

that he had made a dangerous and stormy journey over the ocean of life, whilst the youthful glow in his eye, and the warm interest he took in every topic, showed that he had been fortunate enough to escape shipwreck.

My other companion, on the contrary, notwithstanding his well-preserved exterior, had very much the appearance of a man who had saved the ship and lost the cargo. His handsome eyes were dull, his voice cold, and only now and then, when he made some sneering remark, a faint, worn-out smile would gleam for a moment over his beautiful features.

A smile of this kind thus passed across his face as he noticed the attention with which the other examined the carriage to ascertain whether an impudent wasp, which had paid us a visit through the open window, was really escaped or not. "It seems to me that you honor with too much condescension that insignificant insect," he remarked.

"By no means," replied the other; "and I object decidedly to the phrase 'insignificant insect.' In one of the battles between two South American Republics a similar 'insignificant insect' once decided the fate of two countries. It stung the horse of one of the contending generals so fiercely that the animal threw itself and its rider down a precipice; the army lost its head, and with that the battle, and finally the one country was conquered by the other."

"Well, I retract my words. I shall in future respect both wasps and beetles as exercising a powerful influence over the fate of nations."

"Yes, yes, you are in a mocking humor; but are you sure that the scales of your own fate have not been balanced for a moment, or could be balanced, so nicely that the weight of a fly was all that was necessary to make the one sink and the other to 'kick the beam'?"

"To tell the truth, I have never thought upon it. Have you perhaps experienced anything of the kind?"

"Well—yes!" replied the other, with a faint sigh, and after a moment's pause; "I once stood at the goal of all my wishes. The doors of the temple of fortune

were wide open; I had already placed my foot on the threshhold, and thought, 'In a few moments I shall be the happiest of men'—when my washerwoman's boy threw his black marble on my path, and that little plaything decided my fate. I stumbled, lost my sweetheart, was rejected at my examination, and missed a very probable chance of riches, connections, and domestic happiness in the land of my fathers."

"A black marble? That is figurative."

"No; literal. Here it is!"

So saying, he drew forth a handsome watch, and showed us, suspended from the chain as a token, a little black marble, the favorite toy of small boys.

"Here you behold the ball which overthrew my fortune. If it had been made of lead, I might have believed it to be an enchanted bullet, cast in the wolf's throat by Samuel himself," he continued.

We became, as a matter of course, at once curious to learn the history of the fatal ball. At our request he told it, as follows:

Ten years ago I was a medical student and was reading for my diploma. I was very poor, very industrious, very much in love, and very much discouraged.

My poverty compelled me to diligence. To obtain the means of continuing my studies, I had to give lessons,—and to study with increased vigor, that I might not be compelled to continue giving lessons for too long a period. I had neither time nor money, therefore, to participate in the pleasures of my more lucky fellow-students; and on the very few occasions on which I ventured into society, I was conscious that I was but an awkward clown, and cut but a very sorry figure.

I had attained my twenty-fifth year without ever having spoken to a pretty girl, and the natural consequence was that the first good-looking one who spoke and glanced kindly at me completely captivated me. All the sighs and dreams of my hermit-life seemed to have her only for the object; it was the accumulated love of five years gathered up by her in five minutes.

She was the daughter of a wealthy merchant.

["Hem!" from our handsome traveling companion, as he nodded a couple of times with a faint smile.]

I made her acquaintance during a summer vacation which I passed in the society of a fellow-student in a lonely part of the country, where his father had a little place. The young lady had rashly accepted the invitation of the clergyman's wife, her aunt, to pay her a visit in the country. The monotonous life in the old parsonage, and the total want of her accustomed society, of course soon became tiresome to the brilliant young lady. The parson lived only for his parish and his whist in the evening; his wife was a pleasant, good-natured woman, so full of conversation that now and then there seemed real danger of her over-exerting herself; but her housekeeping and five blessed children afforded such a constant theme of talk that her thoughts never had occasion to leave the parsonage, and the attractions which centered there. Then there was an old maiden aunt, but she was almost dead,—and as a last resort, the parish library, which consisted only of useful and religious books. I acquaint you with all this, that you may understand how a young lady accustomed from her childhood to be surrounded by rich and elegant adorers could possibly condescend to notice such an insignificant bit of game as myself, the poor and shy medical student. Where you are the only one, you may easily be the first one.

She began then by encouraging me. It was a new thing to her, who had only been accustomed to have admirers present themselves, while on my part I was habituated to neglect. I took advantage of this new state of things to tell her the truth whenever she made an unreasonable assertion; and the almost comic astonishment with which she received my contradictions convinced me that this too was something new to her.

"Upon my word, you do astonish me," she exclaimed laughing; "you tell me right to my face that I am mistaken—a rudeness none of my other acquaintances have yet been guilty of; but go on! it is really amusing."

And I continued to tell her truths which she had never heard of—she looking all the while upon me with a roguish, incredulous smile, as if I were telling her a fairy tale. She was indeed enchanting. She seemed to have been brought up for a queen. Her complete beauty, the incomparable charm which she imparted to her changing moods, and the way in which she gave her opinions without the least reference to those of others, made her irresistible. In her manner, she was free—free as a queen, but also as unassailable. Once when we were talking about courtship, she said with lofty assurance: "If any one should dare to court me before I had given him permission, I should dismiss him, however favorably I might be disposed to look upon him in other respects,"—a valuable hint, truly, as far as I was concerned.

Towards the end of the vacation the merchant arrived to take his daughter home: he was a plain, good-natured man, as liberal and free from prejudices as a half-millionaire could possibly be. You soon became convinced that he was no mammon worshiper, but accumulated his riches as an offering to the only idol he adored, his daughter.

"My Flora," he once said, when the topic of the evening at the parsonage was matchmaking, "has always had her own way, and shall be allowed to have it as long as it depends upon me. If Baron Rothschild should come and not find favor in her eyes, I would not say a good word for him. On the other hand, if she should ask my consent to marry a young man who was only rich in his smooth face and his love for her, I should, as her loving father, not lay a straw in their way to the altar."

This was likewise a precious hint, of which I made due note.

The evening before their departure a little social party had been arranged, to which I also received an invitation. During the afternoon we walked in the garden—Flora in company with the old deaf aunt, and I behind them with two of the "blessed children."

Suddenly the goddess of flowers turned around and said: "You return, of course, also, to-morrow?"

"I *would* with pleasure—" I was not allowed to complete the sentence.

"'Would' is the same as 'will,' and 'will' is the same as 'can,'" she interrupted me,—and then addressed her father, who with the parson was coming toward us.

"We shall have company to the city, papa. I'm so glad. Mr. Miller also proposes to leave to-morrow."

This was, of course, enough for the old gentleman to offer me a seat in his carriage, an offer of what to me was a place in the seventh heaven. I was in raptures the whole evening at so delightful a prospect, and rolled away the next morning in the merchant's luxurious traveling-carriage. Ah, what a journey!

I was further fortunate enough to win the favorable regard of the old merchant while we were upon the road homeward. He did me the honor to assure me that it had been a real pleasure to him to make my acquaintance, and that it would be an increased one if he could hope to continue it.

"Nothing easier, dear papa," said Flora, coaxingly. "You have scolded me several times because I have got tired of the old professor and his French lessons; I have therefore tried to persuade Mr. Miller, who is an adept in the modern languages, to give me a couple of hours a week."

"By all means," answered the merchant.

There had, to be sure, never been any allusion to anything of the kind before, and I was not too sure of possessing knowledge enough to continue the tuition of the old professor; but Miss Flora gave me a look so confident and piercing that I found it impossible to make any objections. I accepted the engagement.

Ah, the happy hours of those French lessons! There was not much indeed of that polite language read in them, for as soon as a sentence was at all difficult, my roguish pupil would dispose of it, saying: "This is too much bother, let us skip it." And when I was in the middle of an explanation of the various meanings

of a word, she would stop me with the assurance that now she had learned enough for that time. She had a thousand things to ask me about, which interested her far more than the French.

In particular, she cross-examined me about my visits to a family which I had once told her of. It was the widow of a state-official and her two daughters, a couple of little girls, one of whom was yet in school, while the other had just been confirmed. Both mother and daughters made artificial flowers, and by means of this little branch of industry managed to secure a frugal but independent existence. I had, a short time previously, made the acquaintance of the family by accident, having, as a neighbor and future physician, had an opportunity of being useful to it when the eldest daughter had chanced to scald her arm, and I afterwards visited them frequently to look at my "first patient," as the little Constance was pleased to call herself. The extreme interest with which Miss Flora, after her acquaintance with this episode, would inquire in regard to the health of the little Constance, my visits to her, and what we talked about, became at last so striking that, when I once asked her the reason of this unusual sympathy, she forgot her presence of mind and revealed it. She became suddenly as red as a peony, and asked with flashing eyes if I imagined that she was jealous? This answer was at once so flattering and threatening that I stood for a moment speechless; a single moment is enough for a woman to recover herself. She burst into laughter, as she said, at my own and and my whole sex's boundless conceit, adding presently: "I don't mind confessing that if I were engaged or married to a physician, I would not allow him to make sick-calls on such a pretty girl as your little Constance."

That night a fever of joy kept me awake all night. Another time, when the lesson was to commence, she informed me with her usual charming smile that she had not looked at her lesson: "But what does it matter! You must prepare yourself for something."

"I? For what?"

"For a ball."

"Why, I don't know how to dance."

"You must take lessons, just as I did."

"You are joking, Miss Flora."

"Not at all. I have learned as much as I require, and am obliged to you. It is now your turn to prove that you are not dull. A fortnight hence my father intends giving a grand ball to celebrate the dangerous age of twenty years, to which his only daughter will then attain. Do you intend to be the only knight who refuses to take a part in the tournament?"

"Could it really amuse you to see me present in the lists as the Knight of the Rueful Countenance? Command rather that I start on a voyage to Turkey and bring you back a handful of the Sultan's beard."

"I do not command; I only beg—and remember that it is my first request. When I see you at the ball, I shall consider your knightly probation as accomplished, and you will have no occasion to bespeak the aid of Titania and Oberon. Have I your word, then?"

It was of course impossible to say "no." I was excessively loath to take lessons in this ridiculous dancing, but there was no help for it. Like a knight-errant of old, I went forthwith in search of an amiable sorcerer, and soon got upon his track by means of an advertisement in the paper. He called himself Ruff, I believe. Love does wonders; in a few lessons did this sorcerer teach me the magical motions which are called waltz, polka, and galop; the mazurka proved to be of a higher grade, and I failed in my endeavors to be initiated into its mysteries. "But a fortune may be made without it," were the words of consolation of the polite Ruff.

The nearer the period of the fatal ball approached, the greater became my apprehension. The evening before it took place, I found a pretext to call at the merchant's house, in the vain hope that a dispensation might be granted me.

"Dear me," exclaimed Flora, laughingly, as soon as she perceived the drift of my conversation. "You have full liberty as to that. The little Constance perhaps

celebrates a birth-day to-morrow also, and I should be sorry to deprive the darling child of a welcome guest. Pray remember to let us know if you should be engaged elsewhere."

With that she swept out of the room, leaving me to the tender mercies of her six maiden aunts. They looked at me, then at each other.

"I do hope you appreciate your good luck more than that," murmured Aunt Jane.

"It is so difficult to put two and two together!" exclaimed Aunt Ellen.

"I presume you understand Flora," said Aunt Thea.

"I don't know whether you are aware that her cousin, the Lieutenant, comes to town to-morrow," whispered Aunt Celia.

The others said nothing: they contented themselves with shaking their heads, and looking upward to the ceiling; but old Karen, who opened the street-door for me, said with a knowing look: "If the gentleman only knew what I know, he would be sure to come."

I hesitated no longer. Next evening, at the appointed hour, I was ready and eager when a friend, who was also invited, arrived to take me with him. Of course I had taken the utmost pains with my dress, which was perfectly new. I also wore a handsomely embroidered neck-cloth, a present from the little Constance; a pair of bright lacquered boots; a hat fresh from the hands of the hatter, where it had been renovated, indeed, once or twice before; and,—unheard-of luxury!—a pair of genuine French kid gloves!

"If you don't make your fortune this evening," observed my friend, while surveying me approvingly from head to foot, "then you never will."

I confess I thought the same myself, and we were right, both of us, as will appear.

In the superabundance of my joy, I proposed to show off my lately acquired paces, when, at the very first turn, I trod on this unlucky little marble ball which my charwoman's little Peter had left behind him on the floor when she had brought me my carefully-washed

linen; my right foot slipped, my left knee came violently in contact with the floor, and my splendid black pantaloons, possibly burnt in the dyeing, burst into three incurable rents!

I need not tell you that the preparations for the ball had already exhausted my slender finances, and that I was guiltless of possessing two pairs of unmentionables.

After we had wasted considerable time in vain lamentations, my friend volunteered to make a sacrifice for me. He insisted upon remaining at home, and letting me wear his nether garments. Touched by this proof of affection, I consented, and began to draw them on; but, alas! his lower part was not equal in extent to his generosity: my ankles were entirely uncovered, and it was barely possible to walk, let alone dance, in these entirely too tight pantaloons.

A considerable time was wasted in fruitless regrets; but my companion's friendship was yet in reserve. "Wait a minute, I think I know where there is a pair," he cried, hurrying down-stairs. A long minute, indeed. Having hurried from place to place in a vain endeavor to find the owner of the pair he sought, he returned crest-fallen. "Confound it! don't let us think anything more about it," said my trusty chum; "I will stay at home with you this evening. Here, I have brought a lobster and half-a-bottle of punch for a little supper, and when we are through with that we can play a game of checkers, and the evening will be gone before we know it."

I thanked him, both for what he had done and what he had intended to do, but begged him now to do me the only service in his power, namely, to hasten as fast as he could to the house of the merchant, and excuse as well as possible my unavoidable absence.

"I will, my friend; you may rely upon my eloquence," he assured me as he took his departure.

That evening is now so far distant that I can think about it with a certain calmness, and even with an occasional smile. I am therefore fully prepared to expect

that the account of my mishap will have a tendency to make a comic rather than a tragic impression. "Love Without Stockings" * has deprived every stockingless and trowserless wight of the commiseration of all feeling hearts; but I assure you, gentlemen, that at the time I dwelt only on the serious side of the matter, and viewed my misfortunes only with the deepest concern and tribulation.

Although possessed ordinarily of the enviable appetite of a poor student, I barely bestowed an absent-minded glance upon the fine lobster which my friend had brought, and would have considered it an act of treason against my love if I had allowed my thoughts to dwell even for a moment on the bottle of punch.

Having for half an hour or so—my upper part in ball-costume and my nether part in night-dress—with folded arms stared on the wreck of my unmentionables, as the fallen Napoleon on the ruined map of Europe, I rose at last, removed with a sigh my beautiful cravat, assumed my every-day costume, and slowly crept down-stairs. My feet, or my instinct perhaps, drew me to the street, and before the house where I had myself expected to be. The whole second story was a blaze of light, and the music resounded across the street to the opposite pavement, where the revelry had gathered a crowd of listening spectators. I stole in among them and remained there for some time, with my eyes fastened longingly on the illuminated windows, and the shadows flitting behind. Suddenly I heard a rude exclamation behind me, and turning to learn the cause, perceived Constance and her mother in the midst of the crowd. They were returning without escort from an evening call, and ordinary politeness required that I should offer them my company and protection. I accompanied them home, and as the mother could only ascend the steep stairs with some trouble, I could not leave her till we reached her door.

"Won't you step in for a moment and look at the splendid vase of flowers we have just finished to-day?

* A well-known Danish farce.

It will be sent away to-morrow morning, and Constance considers it her masterpiece," asked the friendly old lady. I thanked her, and went in; probably I looked at the flowers too, but I do not recollect it. A moment after, the door-bell was rung. The mother went out, and through the open door I noticed her in the outer room, which served as a shop and work-room, engaged for a while with two elderly ladies. They kept their veils down: their voices seemed familiar to me, but I paid no attention to them; it was of course a matter of indifference to me.

"How very unreasonable people can be," said my old friend as she again returned. "These two ladies insisted that I should promise them a couple of large wreaths, the one of fuchsias, the other of roses, by to-morrow afternoon."

"It must have been some ladies from the country," suggested Constance.

"Quite likely," said I.

"They seemed to know you," said the old lady; "for one of them asked me if you were not Mr. Miller, the medical student."

The fact did not interest me very much. Having exchanged a few phrases of courtesy, I took my leave and returned home. I did not feel like going to bed, but flung myself upon the sofa and counted every stroke of the church-bells as they marked the passing hour. At last I fell asleep.

When I awoke, I saw my trusty friend sitting in a chair near me, pale, wearied, and with crumpled linen. I could see that he had just returned from the ball.

"I had not the heart to awake you," said he gently. "Are you prepared, my poor friend?"

"For what?"

"For the worst! Miss Flora came over at once to me, and inquired after you. I could, of course, not mention the disaster of the pantaloons, and therefore only said that an accident had occurred to you just at the moment you were ready to leave for the ball. At first she looked alarmed, but when I assured her that

it was not dangerous, a light suddenly seemed to break upon her.

"Ah, indeed," she said. Whereupon she hastened over to a couple of old aunts, with whom she seemed to hold an eager and interesting conversation. An hour or so afterward she came up to me again and said gayly, "I have heard about your friend; he is better now." But what she could mean by that, I can't tell. She now danced one dance after another with her cousin, the Lieutenant—handsome, but stupid—who made desperate love to her. At two o'clock in the morning we went to supper, and then—well, are you really fully prepared?"

"Go on," I sighed.

"And then the great merchant delivered a speech, which terminated with the announcement of the engagement of Miss Flora to the handsome simpleton, the Lieutenant: and then everybody cried hurrah—that is, everybody but myself, of course."

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings.

A few months afterward I presented myself before the board of examination, but so disheartened and confused that I found myself unable to answer the simplest questions, and so gave up the attempt to pass. One of the professors who knew me, and was confident that it could not be for want of knowledge in my intended profession that I had failed, sent for me shortly after. "I have a proposition to make to you," he said. "My cousin, Mr. Schwartz, intends to make a voyage to South America, principally for the sake of his health, and desires to have a young physician accompany him; what do you think of the offer?"

What else was there to do but to thank him and accept the proposal? All the happiness which seemed a few months before to be in store for me had now been destroyed through the means of that insignificant black ball.

Our handsome traveling-companion had, during the recital of the whole of this story, maintained a certain

sardonic smile, and frequently with a little nod signified that he not only followed the thread of the story, but could make a guess at what the end would be.

"You have not since learned anything about your youthful flame?" he asked.

"No; when I left the land of my birth, I considered my past as finished, and therefore determined never willingly to revive these sad recollections. They seem now like a half-forgotten song. An active and adventurous life has, in the decade which separates that time from the present, changed the bashful and melancholy youth, who bade farewell to his fatherland, to an independent and prosperous man, who has made up with the world, and built himself a little comfortable cot of content on the site of the ruins of his fortune."

Thus concluded Miller, with a sort of smiling sadness as he twirled the black ball between his fingers.

"I wonder now if the air-castle which was knocked down by that little ball really contained all the happiness you gave it credit for," began the other, after a little pause. "Suppose for a moment that it is just this little ball to which you are indebted for your whole well-being. What if you had not trodden upon it?"

"Then everything would have been different. *How* it would have been with me, I cannot of course venture to depict, with photographic accuracy; for what has never come to pass one may fill up in a thousand ways."

"Will you allow me to fill up one outline? I am neither poet nor prophet, but it is just possible that I might succeed in sketching a picture of your lost happiness. Have I your permission?"

"Certainly, sir, and indeed I shall be obliged to you."

"Very well. I put myself in your place—go back ten years in time—assume your splendid clothes and splendid expectations, and place my foot on the fatal ball,—or still better, I remain here where we are, both as regards time and place, and throw a backward glance at the past ten years to learn how events would have shaped themselves if your good genius had *not* appeared in the shape of your washer-woman's little Peter, and thrown

his talisman before your feet—*my* feet, I will say; for if I am in your place, I must talk in the first person."

Well, then, I did not tread on the black ball—did not burst my trousers—consequently arrived in good time at the ball, and floated as a happy zephyr with the lovely Flora, through the heavens of the mazurkas and redowas, directly into the cotillon. In the pleasant tour with "the ring, the rose, and the basket," she asked me, with her most captivating smile, which of these three gifts of fortune I would select at her hands?

What a question! The ring was of course the first link of the golden chain which could alone bind my earthly existence to heavenly happiness. This was my answer, and I meant it, because I really believed it.

"Think while there is time. I have my little whims and fancies, and you run the risk of my giving it to you in earnest if you ask for it this moment."

"Then I would be the happiest of mortals."

"For the third and last time—consider!"

"For time and eternity. Give it to me."

Five minutes after, the engagement was publicly announced; and ten minutes afterward every one present had in subdued whispers expressed their conviction that I had engaged myself to the merchant's money-bags, and taken his daughter as the unavoidable appendage thereto.

During the next eight days, to judge by my reputation, I was looked upon as the most contemptible person in Copenhagen, and my rival would have been canonized at once, and considered worthy of the honors of a saint at my expense. When my name was mentioned in society, the aunts shook their heads, the female cousins turned up their delicate noses, and the male cousins were speechless in unutterable contempt: no poor devil can commit a greater crime than to form an engagement with a rich young lady: whether they are really in love with each other, is of not the least moment.

We were now, for a fortnight, handed around in the family circle, that we might be generally congratulated.

"One may indeed wish *you* joy, sir," was the constantly recurring phrase, but it sounded to me as if it was accompanied with a mental reservation. Did we show ourselves in the street, or on a public promenade, some passer-by would be sure to whisper:—"There goes the rich Miss X. with her affianced lover"; and not seldom I heard "poor girl!" added to it.

"*You* may say indeed that you have made your fortune," said Aunt Jane.

"Bless me, and what a fortune!" sighed Aunt Celia.

"I little expected *you* would be the happy man," added Aunt Thea; while another whispered through her thin lips, "It is to be hoped that you will appreciate your happiness."

During our brief engagement I became acquainted with traits in Flora's character which I had not an opportunity of before observing. From the hand of nature she was doubtless originally endowed with excellent gifts, both physical and mental; but her education had by no means developed the latter to the same extent as the former. She had in fact from her earliest childhood been exposed to an influence which, more than any other, is calculated to destroy every noble and beautiful germ—that of idolatry. She had never known what it was to forego a wish, or to purchase its attainment with an exertion; she had been accustomed to consider her will as the law for others about her, and her whim as the only one to be consulted. As I said, I had not noticed all this at first, because I had seen her afar off, as a goddess on a pedestal, and, as such, her Olympian disregard of others became her charmingly; but now, when I saw her walk about on earth among us, her godlike privileges appeared to me occasionally in the light of presumption. However, to touch upon that subject while she was yet living within the sacred precinct of her home was not to be thought of; for her old father, the high-priest, and the six aunts, her fanatical priestesses, would instantly have cast me out of the temple as a wicked blasphemer, if I had dared to utter a doubt about the infallibility of Flora, or intimated that there

might be a case in which it was her duty to surrender her own wishes. My only hope now was in marriage.

But Flora made use of the honeymoon to introduce into her new home the same arrangements as in her father's house. That all the six priestesses followed their little idol, need not be told, and that, by degrees, I was coaxed to assume the *rôle* of high-priest in her father's stead, will also perhaps not surprise you. The honeymoon had not yet come to an end before an earthquake shook the foundations of the temple. I had one day signed my name as a subscriber to a dinner to be given in honor of a friend on the eve of his departure from the city, and it appeared that my wife had on the same day invited a couple of cousins and their husbands to inspect our dovecot, and to join the turtle-doves in a drive out to her father's villa.

I excused myself by saying that I was ignorant of her arrangements, and asked if they could not be changed. "By no means—impossible!" But it would be an easy thing for me to send an excuse, she thought. I assured her that this too was impossible.

"And why?" she asked.

"Because I have promised to go."

"The society of your friends, I perceive, has begun already to be more agreeable to you than mine."

"The question is not which society I prefer, but simply about keeping my word."

"But you were under no necessity to promise anything?"

"Of course I was not compelled to do it, but I trust you do not intend thus to deprive me of my personal liberty so that I cannot dispose of half a day's leisure without first getting permission."

"Personal liberty! a pretty word, indeed! A husband has always liberty to do his duty when he loves his wife. He only talks of compulsion when he wishes to evade the promises he has given her."

"Dearest Flora, it is just because I like to be considered a man of my word that I am obliged to leave you to-day, and I am surprised to find that my love for you

can for a moment, in your opinion, be contrasted with my courtesies to some of my companions and a number of strangers."

"Really, the only surprise to me is, that you feel yourself under greater and more sacred obligations to these strangers than to me and my family."

"This surprise you must have had at a bargain, for——"

"On the contrary, I think it has cost me dearly."

It was time to give the dialogue a new direction. Taking both my wife's hands I said gently, but seriously, "Flora, you will neither listen to what I say nor understand what you hear."

"That is, that I am stupid and unreasonable. Pray go on. What delicate compliments! One must be used to such, not to show surprise." Upon which she burst into tears and wished to leave the room, but I detained her, and tried, half in joke and half in earnest, by a recapitulation of our conversation, to convince her of being wrong. When I finally thought I had succeeded, she raised her head, which meanwhile had rested on my shoulder, and dried her eyes.

"You won't go, then," she smiled; but the smile reminded me rather of the appeased goddess than the sinner who has received pardon.

"I must," I insisted.

"You must," she repeated, with the usual little saucy toss of her head, as then with her contemptuous "Pshaw!" she swept away my promise like everything else which stood in her way. She then burst into laughter, clapped her hands and danced out of the room. An hour after, a servant brought me a note, saying: "We are of course extremely sorry to do without you, but are aware that matters of business must be attended to." It was signed by my friend Captain Brask, who was to preside at the dinner; but how did he come to send me such an epistle? Well, my lady had ordered our honest Anders to take her husband's compliments and excuses to the committee, and say that unavoidable business called him from the city this very afternoon.

This was one of the little tricks in which she had excelled in her own home. Her father viewed them as childish pranks, but I had learned from his example that if they were left unchecked, my last remnant of independence would soon be swept away. I went therefore quietly, but with a very serious countenance, into the sitting-room, where I was received with a chorus of laughter from Flora and all the aunts, who could not sufficiently admire this precious practical joke.

"I am very unwilling to make any complaints, Flora, but you have done that to-day which I must beg of you not to repeat another time. You will probably say that it is a little innocent artifice which you have played upon your father scores of times, without his finding fault with it. I know too well that this has often been the case, but if you think it an innocent one, you make a grievous error. It proves a contempt for the truth and the rights of others which you are not permitted to exhibit toward your poorest menial, much less your husband, and which would be entirely unpardonable if you had been brought up according to the usual rules."

"According to the usual rules!" reiterated Flora, in a trembling voice and with flashing eyes; "be kind enough to explain your meaning."

"Well, then, when a child is not only guilty of a lie, but what is worse, puts the guilt of it upon another, an ordinary educator of children will admonish it severely for the first time, perhaps for the second time; but the third time, a severer remedy is applied. Now, you have been accustomed to have such little jokes admired as strokes of genius, and I shall therefore for this time not mind your thoughtlessness so much. Both for your sake and mine I shall not recall the message you sent in my name. I shall not take part in the public dinner, but it necessarily follows that the gentlemen who think me engaged in business out of town must neither learn that I have dined at home nor made a pleasure-drive on the beach-road. I shall therefore make your words the truth as near as possible, and go into the country this afternoon."

"You will!"

"Yes!"

"Only to spite me."

"I have told you the reason."

"Where do you intend to go, if I may ask?"

"Any place; perhaps to Malmoe or to Roeskilde."

"I will go with you."

"That would be unbecoming, as you have invited your friends here, and your father is expecting you this evening."

"Oh, I see it all,—you prefer to go alone, perhaps to pay a visit to one of your former lady favorites."

"If you really think so, you do not deserve to be contradicted. Enough: I shall leave you this afternoon."

Of the scene which ensued I shall not attempt to give the details. Flora shed abundant tears, while the aunts broke forth into an avalanche of angry words, allusions and accusations. As I had said, I went forth on my journey.

When I returned in the evening, I found the house empty. Midnight! and nobody came. Morning and noon passed away in their turn, and yet not so much as a single aunt made her appearance. Evening came and went again, and I was still alone.

The next morning I drove out to my father-in-law's villa. It looked nearly as empty there as at home. The ladies, who were usually to be seen embroidering or amusing themselves upon the lawn in front of the house, had possibly fled in terror at my approach. My worthy servant Anders was the only person visible, and he received me with an air of trouble, having nothing else to communicate than that the old gentleman wished to see me in his room. I soon discovered that I had been expected, for the speech with which the old man received me showed evident traces of thorough preparation and study. I shall only give the drift of the introduction; it was a fresh variation of the inexhaustible theme—my matchless and undeserved piece of good fortune. Then followed the full register of my sins.

First: I had in the most brutal manner, and in the

presence of others, overwhelmed my poor young wife with all kinds of abuse—a treatment to which she was entirely unaccustomed.

Secondly: I had alluded to him, my benefactor, with scorn and contempt, as a man without principles, and a father who had educated his only child in lies and deception.

Thirdly: I had not even limited my insults to words, but had plainly declared that on future occasions I should amend my wife's neglected education by personal chastisement.

Fourthly and last: I had shown myself to be so utterly shameless that I had not hesitated to make, in presence of my wife and her family, the atrocious confessions of unworthy intrigues.

The judgment therefore was, that I must make her the most complete apology, and beg her pardon; and promise him solemnly that I would behave better in future.

Had I received these charges and this judgment in writing, I should have been inclined to look upon the whole thing as a jest of the old gentleman; but the appearance of displeasure manifest during its oral delivery soon convinced me that he was fully in earnest.

I attempted several times to get in a word, but he cried out each time: "Let me speak out!" with a violence that almost threatened an apoplectic stroke. The oration had been carefully prepared, and had to be delivered to the last syllable.

At its conclusion, I told him the real state of affairs. My explanations and assurance somewhat quieted him, but by no means satisfied him completely. He said that I did not know how to manage so delicate a creature as Flora; that I had made altogether too much ado about a childish prank, and however ingeniously I colored my conduct, I was still the one most in the wrong. Flora had not misrepresented the circumstances, nor had the aunts, and they had understood my remarks the same as herself. However, as the intention of the whole had not been as bad as the words, he would try to induce

her to forget and forgive the whole affair; she was such a sweet angel that a few kind words from me would be enough to appease her indignation.

I assured him that I was quite ready to speak them; that I had forgiven *her* fault at once, and hoped that upon reflection she would admit that my conduct had not deserved these reproaches.

With this message the old gentleman went out for Flora, who "did not feel very well," whilst I went into the garden to await her. At last he appeared, with Flora on his arm: behind him followed the six aunts in solemn procession. Even had Flora felt herself to be in the wrong, its confession in the presence of these her devoted priestesses would have been impossible.

As a matter of course, I was the first to extend the hand of reconciliation, and in fact it was not Flora, but her father, who placed her hand in mine.

"Father wishes that all shall be forgotten, and as he assures me that nothing of the kind shall ever occur again, let us talk no more about it." These were her words. They were so ambiguous that they might very well presuppose a confession of wrong and apology on my part; but as I was unwilling to cause a new scene, I refrained from urging any explanation.

I soon became aware that Flora neither loved me nor had loved any one else for his own sake. She had, as has been said, from her birth been accustomed to accept sacrifices; therefore she loved first and foremost her father, who had made the most; next the aunts, particularly Aunt Celia; and generally all who were disposed to give up their own opinions and sense of right for hers; but least of all did she love her husband, who owed her everything and consequently had nothing to offer. It was a bitter experience, but every day confirmed it still more, and I doubt if any person in my place could have managed to avoid it.

Having enjoyed in this manner for a couple of years my very dubious good fortune, I believed at last that a happier future was at hand. A little child, a daughter, came, and I fondly hoped to have secured a point

of union in the heart of Flora. But alas, no! The young mother's previous and subsequent weakness but increased her demands and my duties *ad infinitum;* and as soon as the little one made its appearance, it became plain that in the future there would be two objects of idolatry, instead of one. Flora looked upon the baby as the ideal of perfection, and so it was with the grandfather and the aunts. I was, of course, delighted with my first-born as much as a man reasonably can be who has become the father of a fine healthy child; but as I could not, like all the others, at once discover that it was an exact likeness of Flora, and that eight days after its birth it already began to notice what was going on around it, Flora gave me a withering look of contempt, the old gentleman reddened with anger, and hurried away that he might not commit himself, and Aunt Celia candidly declared that I was as destitute of eyes in my head as of heart in my body—that I was no better than a brute.

The mother did, in reality, rear the child to be a perfect fac-simile of herself. It learned very early that its will was law, and all that it coveted was its property. That it began to cry as soon as it saw me, Flora explained as a proof of its susceptible feelings; "it could see that I cared nothing for it;" but I soon discovered the cause of the little one's terror. Both mother and aunts and nurse made use of me as a bugbear. When the child was four years old, she was at once the prettiest and most self-willed child I had ever known; and as I was the only one who attempted to keep her within bounds, and thus occasionally caused scenes reminding one of the murder of the innocents at Bethlehem, as far as the Rama shrieks went, she must needs have looked upon me as a second King Herod, about whom Aunt Celia had so much to tell her.

My position of father, then, was not much more enviable than that of husband. Suddenly, our mode of life suffered a violent change. The so-called prosperous times came to a grievous end in 1857, and the wealth of many an honest trader with them. My father-

in-law, whose house was supposed to rest on a rock, suffered by the failures of some great Hamburg houses such an enormous loss that he began to apprehend the worst, and ordered his chief-clerk to make up for him his balance-sheet. The cashier, who, on his own behalf and venture, had disposed of considerable sums which he could not account for, to cover up his speculations, had disappeared with the cash on hand and all the available assets. The news gave the old merchant his death-blow. He was struck by apoplexy before the messenger had ceased speaking, and when the physician arrived, he was dead. When the estate was wound up, the result was painful. But a small percentage was left for the creditors; and my wife's maternal inheritance, which had been invested in the business, was thus also entirely swallowed up. Unfortunately for myself, that I might satisfy in some degree my wife's pretensions to elegance, I had kept up a costlier household establishment than our actual income would warrant, and thereby incurred a debt of several thousand dollars. Payment was of course called for at once, and I was obliged to apply to the Court of Bankruptcy for relief. Our costly furniture now vanished piece by piece under the stroke of the auctioneer's hammer. Only enough was left to furnish plainly a couple of rooms which I engaged in an humbler portion of the city. In the midst of these terrible reverses, we suffered a painful loss—an epidemic fever carried off our little girl.

We stood now alone and poor in the wide world. I engaged with indefatigable exertion in every kind of work by which anything could be earned; limited our expenses to the utmost, and began already to nourish the hope that adversity might bring about what happier days had failed to do—a more intimate and happier relation between us. But this hope also failed me. Flora had never known work, and had always detested economy; how could she then appreciate my exertions! When I endeavored from early morning till late in the evening to procure absolute necessities, she saw nothing in that which deserved acknowledgment; she only no-

ticed that I neglected her. In the frugal existence which it cost me so much labor to obtain for her, she saw only want, constraint, and emptiness. She had never had sufficient self-denial to submit to any kind of exertion, and therefore there was nothing which could interest her. She soon became convinced that she was the unhappiest and most-wronged being in the world. Having ever looked upon the world as made for her sake, she was now disposed to quarrel with the course of nature and destiny as an especial arrangement contrived to pain and worry her. And the blessed old maids did not fail to do their part. They sat as mourners around, and aided her lamentations by their whining pity. When I came home in the evening, I encountered only sullen faces. It was impossible to utter a word which would not give occasion to a bitter answer. I therefore preferred to be silent; but this gave umbrage too, for then my silence was construed as a sign of indifference and contempt. One day I undertook to try if I could not, by argument, bring my wife to reason, but the attempt convinced me that such a result was not to be hoped for. I was overwhelmed with a flood of senseless reproaches and accusations without cause, and was but too glad to make my escape from my wretched home to my work again. When I returned in the evening, the crooked old Aunt Celia opened upon me immediately with a lecture that might have made a saint lose his temper: not content with tearing my wife from the happiness and wealth to which she had been born, and abandoning her to poverty and misery, I now was bent upon killing her with my insults and outrages. This was really too much. I opened the door and told Aunt Cecilia and the other old witches that for this time they might walk down the stairs or vanish up the chimney, but that, if ever they crossed my threshold again, I would throw them out of the window. What a relief it was to me when the words were at last spoken which had so long oppressed me. It seemed as if I had at once succeeded in pushing off six dreadful nightmares from my breast. But now open war was declared.

Flora's bitter feelings toward me assumed henceforth the vigor of unconcealed hatred, and she gave vent to her anger on every occasion with such a concentrated fury that I often thought I could detect traces of a dawning aberration of mind in her. What kind of revenge the aunts resorted to, every one can guess. When once you have thrown down the gage to *one* such fury, your reputation must bear the brunt as well as it may; and I had declared war on all the six. For the space of a year I heard frequently of them, but was saved from their visits. The relations between my wife and myself grew worse and worse; we finally avoided seeing and speaking to each other. One Sunday morning our bell rang I opened the door, and saw to my surprise Aunt Celia standing there.

"I don't intend to enter; don't be afraid," grinned the old maid, with her basilisk smile. "I have only called to tell you that I have won a trifle of an hundred thousand marks in the Hamburg lottery. I have enough to make my old age comfortable, and as I know that the support of Flora must be very inconvenient to you, I come to propose that she shall stay with me. If she wishes to take *you* with her, and you can condescend to put up with our accommodations, you will perhaps find the way to my door, and then there will be no occasion for you to enter through the window or chimney. Good-by!"

This was, I think, the happiest day of our married life, for it was the last. Flora and I agreed to a quiet separation, and each of us went our own way: she to her dear aunt, and I forth into the wide world, to that liberty and peace I had so long sighed for.

You now behold me, gentlemen, ten years after the unfortunate ball, on my way to Algiers to try my fortune in another part of the world, with no other possessions than a large store of gloomy memories, a mind ill at ease, and with deadened feelings. Had I, on the contrary, on that fatal evening been so fortunate as to stumble over the little black marble, I should now find myself a prosperous man, enriched with an adventurous

life's interesting recollections, and on a trip of pleasure to Paris, to return in a short time to the land of my birth.

"Well, my dear doctor, how do you like the continuation of your history? If now it should happen to be true, do you not think you would have good cause to set your black marble in Brazilian diamonds?"

The train began to slacken its speed; we presently entered the huge station which terminates "*le chemin de fer du Nord.*" Miller sat in a brown study for a few moments, which he broke off by seizing his traveling companion's hand, saying: "It is not impossible that such a sequel might have happened, as indeed I must confess I knew very little of the young lady I lost, and I admit that she might have possessed beauty, wealth, and elegant manners, without therefore being the source of happiness I looked for. But I am much obliged to you for your entertaining story. Although I knew it was but a mere exercise of your powers of invention, I will confess that at times I almost believed the whole to be true."

"It is not so very strange, for I had it in confidence from a most reliable person," answered the other.

"From a reliable person!" cried Miller, astonished.

"From absolutely the most reliable."

"How? You are——"

"The Lieutenant; you are conversing with him, and with no one else! The more's the pity. Good-bye, and I hope you will enjoy Paris!"

And how did the story end? By rights it ended as I have just told it; but not long ago I heard of another which pleased me as much as the first had interested me. One evening, as I was sauntering about our charming Tivoli Gardens, the prettiest and most agreeable place of resort in Europe, and looking at the gay crowds which filled the walks, my eye was caught by two intensely happy faces. They belonged to a man in his best years and a lovely blonde maiden apparently twenty-five years of age. As the gentleman caught

sight of me, he hurried over with an exclamation of pleasure; I was embarrassed for a moment, the recollection of strange faces not being one of my strong points, as I have before explained, particularly when so much changed in expression as was the case at present.

"Don't you really know me again?" he asked, laughing at my vain attempt to recall him to my recollection.

"What! is it possible! my unfortunate travelling companion with the black marble!"

"The same; and no wonder that you failed to recognize him, as he is now, on the contrary, the happiest man in the world. Let me present to you my dearest love, my little Constance!"

And then he related to me the story of his return and engagement. It was so interesting and romantic that I should dearly like to acquaint my reader with it also, but I have no time at present, having promised to write a poem for their nuptials: and it must be ready to-night, as it is to be used to-morrow.

Lieut. J. H. Scott, U.S.R.M., has told this simple but thrilling incident of the sea for the readers of ROMANCE.

A SAILOR OF THE "SARACEN."

My life as a cabin-boy on board of the "Saracen" was a hard one. The "Saracen" was a fine steam-packet of the early days, which carried the mail between New York and Liverpool. She took first and second cabin passengers, immigrants and a general cargo. It was my first experience as a sailor, and I confess that it did not come up to my expectations. A sailor's life had figured in my imagination as one of the greatest independence. I found it more like slavery than anything else. Every one seemed to take the greatest pleasure in abusing me, and making my life miserable generally. I was kicked and ordered about from morning until night. Every menial service that could be thought of I was made to do. I was thoroughly disheartened and discouraged before many days, for there was not one person in the whole ship who gave me a kind word or look. My greatest tormentor was the second mate, a man named Douglass. He was a good sailor, but by nature he was a brute, a coward and a bully.

When we arrived at Liverpool, my work from experience had become easier, and as the men were fully employed on other matters than bothering me, I began to take some sort of interest in life. One of the crew deserting, he was replaced by a man named Savage, who was a big, broad, powerful fellow, with an honest, upright face, that attracted everybody who met him. Somehow, he took a fancy to me, and after that, nobody but the second mate ever abused me, and by dint of caution I managed to avoid him very successfully.

We soon had our return cargo below the hatches, and after dropping down the stream, the tender brought off the passengers, and we got under way homeward bound.

We had an ordinary, uneventful passage, until we arrived off the Grand Banks, where we ran into a dense fog and the weather became colder. The fog was so thick that it seemed as though we were sailing in the clouds, and the moisture dropped from aloft like rain. Every noise had an uncanny sound, and the whistle, which was blown frequently as warning of our approach, sounded as though it came from half-a-dozen different places at once. A restless and oppressive feeling seemed to fill the air, and the passengers and crew paced silently up and down the decks, pausing every now and then, as if they had heard some strange sound. They seldom spoke to each other, and when they did, it was always in whispers and with cautious glances over their shoulders. Why we should have been so affected, is more than I can explain.

I was standing on deck and Savage was passing me when he stopped and said, "I think there are bergs around. Don't you feel it getting colder?"

I had felt it, and was asking him questions about bergs, when the look-outs both cried, "*Starboard, sir! Ice ahead!*"

Before the ship could answer her helm, I saw an immense shape of white, towering high above us, and the next minute we crashed into a solid mass of ice, which looked like a mountain. The shock was terrific and dislodged a huge fragment, which fell crashing through our decks, and we heard the rush of the water, as the vessel began to fill and sink with incredible rapidity.

As soon as they could collect themselves, every one rushed to the boats. Savage and I managed to crowd into the second cutter. She was soon lowered away, and we shoved off, and lay to a little distance from the ship. We were packed in so tightly that it was next to impossible to even turn around, and the gunwales were barely awash. I found that Mr. Douglass had charge of the boat, and my heart sank with fear.

We saw two other boats get away before the "Saracen," throwing her stern high in the air, and amidst a great rush of water, sank from our sight. One of the

other boats was caught in the vortex and swamped, throwing the occupants into the water. The suction drew our boat in among them. Those who could, grasped our gunwales, and endeavored to climb aboard, but Mr. Douglass drove them back with blows from the tiller, and cursing us for our clumsiness, bade us get out the oars.

The boat was so greatly crowded that this was difficult to accomplish, but after a good deal of trouble, we managed to ship them, and had already taken a stroke, when the gunwale was grasped by a woman holding a child in her arms. Mr. Douglass, with an oath, hit her with the tiller, but, although she groaned from the pain, she still hung on with a grip like death. He raised the tiller to hit her again, when Savage stood up from his oar, saying, "Hold on, sir! she can have my place," and without another word he slid overboard, and had shoved the woman in among us, before we had recovered from our astonishment.

As he swam away, I called to him to come back, but he only turned and waved his hand, and while we were gazing after him, he disappeared in the fog.

The sea remained calm, and the next morning we were picked up by the bark "Mohasset" and landed in Philadelphia.

Savage was never heard of again. He must have perished, but he died a hero, and, like many others who have performed the noblest deeds that man can do, he is utterly unknown.

A cooling breeze from a Swedish Christmas pervades this entertaining little story of a stupid fellow's blunder. It is translated for ROMANCE from the Swedish of Anna Wahlenberg by Anna Gulbranson.

MATTSPELLE.

EARLY one morning a light gleamed in the barn chamber. Mattspelle, who had arisen a half-hour earlier than usual, had lighted a bit of candle stuck in a bottle, and stood arranging his hair before a cheap little looking-glass, hung on the window-sash. It was the day before Christmas, called Christmas Eve in Sweden, and he must look his best.

He had a most obstinate shock of tow hair. On week-days it stood out in all directions around his calm, good-natured face, with its round cheeks and light-blue, absent-minded eyes. On Sunday cold water was brought into use; the mat lay in order only as long as it was wet, and then it was the old story again.

But on holidays it occasionally happened that Mattspelle looked really tidy, for he had procured some tallow wherewith to anoint his locks, and for several days afterward his hair shone so that it was hard to tell what was its original color. To-day he combed and brushed, and brushed and combed, until not only his hair but his face shone.

He was glad that it was Christmas Eve. He thought of the porridge and ham and all the good things, and of the presents which the master and mistress never failed to provide for their servants.

He was in luck to get such a good place with Mr. Stenström. It was a year last summer since he had come here, and he might have come sooner if he had only been confirmed. For two years he had tried in vain. He was so stupid; he could scarcely answer a single question. The third year it was the same way, with regard to questions, but this time he knew some-

thing—he could repeat the catechism from cover to cover. If he were asked how many persons there were in the Trinity, he blinked from under his tow head and said not a word. But if some one started in on the catechism, he could rattle on like running water. So he was confirmed, for surely no one could deny that he knew his catechism.

In spite of this, however, it was hard to see any growth of intelligence in Mattspelle. He was not quick nor bright; but he was as strong as a full-grown man, and did what he was told, as a soldier obeys orders. If he was sent to tar a boat, he tarred it both outside and in, for no one had told him where to stop; and if his master bade him shut the door tight, he would slam it so that the glass almost cracked. He was a conscientious fellow.

The bell rang at one o'clock. On Christmas Eve, every one, old and young, master, mistress and servants, had lunch together and dipped bread in the gravy.

The kettle was in the kitchen, which had been decorated for the occasion. Chopped evergreen was strewn on the floor, and branches of it were all about the room. The shelves holding the burnished coppers were decked out with fancy paper; fresh white cloths were spread over the tables.

The kettle was there in which the Christmas ham had been cooked, and here every one came to dip his slices of bread, and then lift them out on to small plates. On the tables were ham and sausage and potatoes and Christmas ale. One could well satisfy himself with these, and the rest was kept for supper.

At present no one seemed to want anything else. The bread-slices vanished as if they were candy, and the children would scarcely leave off eating them. They pushed and crowded each other, and played boats with their bread-slices in the kettle, until they fell apart.

But the happiest of all was Mattspelle. He stood behind the others with a look of great content on his face. Not a word did he utter, for Mattspelle seldom

opened his mouth except to eat, and he did not crowd to the front, for he was no forward fellow. But when the house-mother asked him if he wanted more bread, his round face shone still brighter, and when Marie the housemaid took his bread and dipped it for him, he even smiled.

The mistress was thankful when the lunch was over. She expected her sister, and her brother-in-law the post-master, and their two children to supper, and there was yet much to be done. The cakes were not ready; the candles were not yet fastened in the sconces; the little ones must be brushed and have fresh collars; the presents must be sealed up; the Christmas table must be arranged. There were a thousand things to do.

Just as she was busiest in the kitchen, she remembered that there were some things to be brought from the store. She went in to her husband to ask if he could spare one of his men.

"Certainly!"

Mattspelle was sent for, and soon the sleigh was brought to the door. The mistress came out with a long list of articles needed, and baskets, jugs and bags were put into the sleigh.

And, first and last, Mattspelle was cautioned to be careful and look to everything.

Oh, yes, he would be very careful. That was all right. And he grasped the reins, ready to start; but at this moment out rushed eight-year-old Kerstin.

"Mamma, I want to go too!"

She was a regular tomboy. She liked to be in the stable and cow-yard with the cattle, and enjoyed nothing more than to ride on the hay-cart, the wood-cart, and in the sleigh, if nothing more tempting offered. She had nearly missed Mattspelle, for she and her brother were quarrelling over a present which was sealed up, and which she was determined at least to feel of. But just then she heard Svarten neigh, and it was to her like a battle-cry.

"Can't you stay at home on Christmas Eve?" said her mother, trying to push her back into the house.

"It will be dark before he gets back, and it is so cold!"

Kerstin stamped her foot and shrieked:—

"I will! I will! Papa says that we must be out every day, and I have stayed in all the morning"; and peeping from under her mother's arm, she cried to Mattspelle: "Wait a bit! I'm coming."

She darted like an arrow into the house, and before the slow Mattspelle could obey his mistress's orders and drive on, the child was back, with her cloak flying open, and her fur cap perched on her head. She jumped up beside Mattspelle, jerked the reins from his hands, and chirruped to Svarten.

The mother called after her, and was obliged to coax and beg her to wait a little till some one could bring wraps, so that she might not catch cold and fall ill.

Mrs. Stenström was really vexed and scolded, while she carefully wrapped up Kerstin's little feet, hands and body. She was "a naughty, wilful child, who always wanted her own way," and if it were not Christmas Eve, she would "tell papa, and put an end to the matter."

"Oh, papa would let me go," cried Kerstin, getting on the last mitten and taking a fresh grasp on the reins.

She sat beside Mattspelle, her little nose in the air, her blue eyes scarcely showing under the fur; she nodded and smiled to her mother, the little white teeth gleaming, and mamma must nod and smile back, although she really was vexed with the spoiled child.

The sleigh flew off, and Mrs. Stenström went in. When the father was told of Kerstin's escapade, he only laughed. She was the most mischievous of the children, and it was just as well she was out of the way when they were all so busy, he said.

Time passed. Every one was busy, sealing up the presents and writing rhymes. Papa was called in to dress the tree, or else it would never be finished. Twilight came. The lights were lit and the supper-table spread. At five o'clock it was pitch-dark. The guests were expected at any moment, and the hostess had gone to dress.

But where were Kerstin and Mattspelle? The mother had once or twice wondered that they had not yet returned, and the father grumbled over the delay. Still, there was no cause for alarm, for one was always obliged to wait in the stores on such a night.

Pretty soon Emma, the cook, crossing the yard, heard sleigh-bells, and saw Svarten, and the sleigh, with Mattspelle on the seat. Kerstin was not there; but then, she was such a wild youngster, always jumping out of the carriage without being helped! Probably she was out, shutting the gate.

Emma called to Mattspelle, but he neither stopped nor answered.

"Hello, Mattspelle! It looks as if you had brought back a smaller load than you took with you."

Mattspelle hardly saw her, although she carried a lantern. He drove on a little, and stopped before he had reached the kitchen door, got down, and began attending to the horse.

Emma had a presentiment of some disaster, and went forward, throwing the light on his face. He looked strange, and turned away his eyes.

"Has anything happened?"

Mattspelle said nothing.

"Answer, man. What have you done with her?"

Emma took hold of him and turned him round. He stood there before her, and dropped the whip in the snow.

"I—I—could not help it."

His voice sounded as if the tears were not far away, and he looked at Emma pleadingly, as if he hoped she might help him.

Meanwhile there was a stir within. The bells had been heard, and maids and children peered from the windows and doors, and hastened out when they saw that something unusual had happened.

Emma brushed past them, pointed at Mattspelle, and gasped out something unintelligible. Almost breathless, she hurried into the drawing-room, where the master was lighting the candles in the sconces.

As he looked at her, he trembled. He thought the house was on fire.

"What is it?"

"Mattspelle has come back, and without Kerstin."

The master rushed out, pale with fright. The hall was full of people, and they had got Mattspelle inside of the door. He stood in the midst of them, cap in hand, pale and frightened, so that, in spite of the grease and cold water, his hair stood out in all directions. His eyes were fixed on the floor. Thus far no one had succeeded in getting a word out of him.

"What does this mean?" cried Mr. Stenström. "What have you done with her?"

"I couldn't help it," answered the man, but without lifting his eyes. "It wasn't my fault—she fell down—the hill."

"Did she fall off? But she isn't lying there now?"

He took the man by the shoulder and shook him.

"Answer, fellow!"

"Ye-e-s," said Mattspelle.

"And you did not lift her up?"

No answer.

"You went on again?"

Mattspelle glanced up a moment, then looked at his feet again.

"It was all over," he said.

"You don't know what you are saying, fool!" shrieked the unhappy father, and shook him again. Suddenly he released him, and cried out:—

"Bring lanterns."

All was excitement. The mother, almost overcome by the news, rushed out into the snow after her husband, while one of the maids hastened after her with wraps. The house was deserted.

Mattspelle slowly lifted his eyes and gazed at the excited people. An expression of surprise was depicted on his large, heavy features. He pulled at his hair, but not a word came from him.

"Where did it happen?" asked one of the party hurrying back. In the confusion no one had thought of this.

"It was close by the second gate," said Mattspelle, and pointed in that direction.

His questioner took him by the arm and pushed him down the steps.

"I'll teach you to stand there and point! Aren't you able to go with us and show us the place?"

Mr. Stenström had got into the sleigh with his wife and driven off. The others hurried after.

At the second gate, they halted, and master, mistress, children and servants carefully searched the snow by the light of the lanterns. It was a weird-looking group. Mattspelle was among the first, and looked carefully down the ditch.

"It was on the right side," he said.

The mother sobbed piteously, while the others spoke in whispers. It was a sorrowful Christmas Eve, instead of the joyous, happy night which had been so longingly awaited, and for which so many glad preparations had been made. How should they find Kerstin? Perhaps already dead.

The husband tried to calm his wife. Probably the child had struck on a stone and had fainted, and that idiot had lost his wits and driven off without her. Nothing more alarming could have happened.

Soon sleigh-bells were heard. They came nearer. "It is the postmaster's sleigh," said some one.

It was indeed the postmaster who sat on the box with the coachman, and in the sleigh were his wife and the children, almost hidden in furs. The sleigh stopped.

"What has happened?" was asked.

Mr. Stenström began to explain, and just then a little hand was thrust out of the mass of furs, waving a cap.

"Hello, papa, here I am."

It was Kerstin's voice. The father and mother could not believe their eyes. Yes, their darling stood before them. The mother must feel of her with her trembling hands.

"How are you, darling? Did you hurt yourself? How did it happen? Where did you find her?"

"Find her!" No one understood, and Kerstin opened

wide her large eyes. What was the matter with them? She was all right.

While Mattspelle waited in the store for his purchases, she had gone into the postmaster's, and there it was decided that she should return with them, instead of with the man. That was all.

"But didn't you tell him when you went in?"

Of course she did; and he had been invited into the kitchen and treated to cake and wine.

"Where is that blockhead?" burst out the father, and turned so abruptly that he very nearly knocked over Mattspelle, who stood there as if wishing to attract his master's attention.

"Ah, there you are, you numskull! What's this yarn you have been telling us? Didn't you know that Kerstin was coming back with the postmaster?"

Mattspelle stared. "Ye-e-s," he finally said.

"Well, then, how could you lose her on the way?"

No answer. Mattspelle scratched his tow head and looked away.

"Perhaps it was something else you lost?"

"Ye-e-s."

"What was it then?"

This was beyond Mattspelle's comprehension. Didn't his master know for what they had been searching so late in the evening?

"Don't you hear me, boy?"

"It lies down there in the ditch," answered he, going on a few steps to point out the spot.

They all followed him. Yes, there was something dark lying in the ditch, and in the snow a thick something was slowly trickling.

"What is it?" asked his mistress.

Mattspelle twisted his cap. Were they blind, too?

"Why, it's the syrup-jug."

"The syrup-jug!"

It was Mrs. Stenström's large jug which lay there, and for which they had searched with such sorrow and anxiety. For a moment no one spoke. Then all began to shout and laugh, so that they could scarcely stand,

and the Christmas joy, which appeared to have gone forever, began anew out in the snow. All's well that ends well.

The only one who stood silent and astonished was Mattspelle. It seemed to him that people were very queer. To be sure, he had wondered a little at the fuss made over the jug, but then to have such mirth when they found it smashed into bits,—that was indeed strange.

"Was that anything to laugh at!" thought Mattspelle.

Among the most charming stories of Italy are those of the chestnut harvest. Here is one, which is taken from *Fraser's Magazine*. It furnishes a pleasant contrast to stories of the far North.

A FILM OF GOSSAMER.

THE Italian October is the time set apart for the chestnut-gathering, the holiday harvest of the year, and those who, like me, are interested in the rural life of the country, may see it then at its merriest and brightest. I had taken up my abode one October in the village of Tereglio, which was admirably situated for my purposes of landscape study, and I had selected for my dwelling a substantial farm-house just outside the gates, owned by one Vincenzo Contrucci, who, like many of these mountaineers, had emigrated to America early in life, and saved sufficient money to return at the end of ten or fifteen years and set up as a small proprietor in his native place. His subsequent prosperity was owing partly to his own industry and good conduct, partly to the thrift and cleverness of Sora Nina, his wife; and the result of their combined good qualities was that he now was one of the most thriving farmers in the commune, owning considerable tracts of chestnut woods along the higher steeps, with vineyards and fields of beans and corn further down. He was a tall, stalwart peasant, with the broad brow and calm eyes of a Tuscan ox; slow of speech, though by no means dull of understanding, he was a complete contrast to the quick-witted, sharp-tongued little wife, who in minor matters governed him completely. Sora Nina was of lighter complexion than is common among those hills, and partly for that reason had been reckoned very pretty before she lost her youthful bloom.

The only daughter, Assunta, was married, and living at some little distance; two sons, Massimo and Ferruccio, were gone to America, as their father had done be-

fore them; and there remained at home only the eldest, Leandro, commonly called Andrino, according to the usual Tuscan fashion of inflecting proper names by dropping the beginning and adding on a diminutive at the end. Andrino was a handsome young farmer of three and twenty, a perfect fac-simile of his father.

The only other permanent member of the family with which I had taken up my abode for the time was a tall gaunt servant woman, Maddalena, a relative of Sora Nina's, who assisted her in the care of the house and poultry-yard, besides helping in some of the lighter work of the farm.

But during my stay at Le Cascatelle (as Contrucci's farm was called, from a little rivulet that came leaping down the steep beside the house) its ordinary inmates were reinforced by three extra hands engaged to assist in gathering in the ripe chestnuts as they fell. Those employed in this way are generally young girls, whose services for forty days are repaid, according to the prevailing form of contract, by a bounty of two sacks of the *farina dolce*, or chestnut flour, at the end of the term, and their board and lodging during its continuance.

Two of Sora Nina's hand-maids, Bertuccia and Vannina, were handsome, dark-browed, gypsy-looking girls from the neighborhood, daughters of small proprietors, whose services were not needed at home, and who were glad to come for the holiday month to the *masseria Contrucci*, not perhaps without a remote hope of establishing themselves there permanently, through the opportunity afforded by daily intercourse for securing the good graces of the handsome young farmer.

Poor little Ginevra had no such pretensions. She was not even pretty, according to the standard of taste prevailing among her equals, for she was slender and undersized, looking, at seventeen, more a child than a woman; and in point of physique seemed but an insignificant creature when put into competition with them. Worst of all, she was but a *contadina*—that is to say, her father cultivated another man's land, on the *mezzeria* or half-produce system; and as in that country

the farmers as a rule are proprietors of the soil they till, this inferiority of social standing naturally made her an object of contempt among her better born associates.

I have said that Ginevra was not even pretty, but it would be more correct to say that she had not been so till now, for she was developing a dainty, wild-rose bloom of her own, a tardy flower of beauty, which had all the added charm of surprise, as it began to flush her pale face with a soft glow of tenderness, and give a new depth and brilliancy to the large gray eyes under their dark brows and lashes. One began to notice then how delicately turned were head and neck and ear under the carelessly knotted kerchief, and when it was thrown aside, what a wealth of nut-brown hair lay plaited, coil on coil, beneath it. She had a voice like a cuckoo, too, and many a passer-by lingered under her father's garden wall to listen to the unseen song-bird who caroled forth the tuneful Tuscan melodies among the pomegranate trees aflame with bloom, and Cape jasmines studded with moon-like orbs breathing incense on the air.

I had not been many days domiciled in Casa Contrucci before I discovered that it had another inmate whose eyes were as little blind as my own to Ginevra's unsuspected attractions. During the day, indeed, I saw little of the household, who were all scattered to their different vocations before I came down to my morning repast, and whose midday meal I did not share, as I generally carried mine with me to the scene of my labors for the time being. At supper, however, I sat down to the common table, which was laid in the great farm kitchen in sufficiently civilized fashion, with coarse but clean homespun damask for cloth and napkins, and with a special dish provided for me by Sora Nina's attentive care. The general fare consisted sometimes of broth and *bouilli*, with salad of wild lettuce or endive, sometimes of a great smoking platter of macaroni stewed with onions, or beans cooked with herbs and oil. The invariable finale of the repast,

however, was the emptying on a dish in the centre of the table of a vast pot of boiled chestnuts, to which every one helped himself, eating them hot from the husk with a little salt, and continuing to do so at intervals throughout the evening.

After supper, Maddalena, who had sat down with the rest, cleared the table and began washing the crockery in a remote corner, while the three girls and Sora Nina, seated in a row at one side of the great blazing hearth, set to work at their spinning, an occupation, however, which by no means implied silence on their part. The men had their places at the other side, but the farmer generally strolled out to smoke his cigar on the threshing floor; while Andrino, after taking a turn or two to look after the live stock, busied himself with some mechanical work, such as repairing quail nets, mending harness, tools, etc., cutting and trimming stakes for the vines, or other useful in-door tasks. While thus employed, he took little part in the feminine conversation going on at the other side of the fireplace, whistling almost inaudibly to himself over his work. I soon began to notice, however, as I too came and went about my little preparations for the business of the morrow, that his eyes began to stray most frequently to the corner where Ginevra sat deftly plying her spindle, and sometimes remained so fixedly turned in that direction that his own fingers forgot to busy themselves with their task.

When it was time to go to bed, the girls, who occupied the attics, went out into the open air to reach the external staircase which alone communicated with them. Ginevra was the last to pass out, and Andrino, who had stationed himself near the door, half obstructing the opening, fixed his eyes long and earnestly on her, as she stood opposite him for a moment. "Felice notte, Ginevra," was all he said, but she crimsoned all over, and looked down for a second or two in indescribable confusion. Then, as if involuntarily, under the influence of some irresistible compulsion, her eyes were slowly raised until they met his with an instantaneous flash of

answering passion in their humid light. She tried to say the commonplace good-night, "Felicissima notte, Sor Andrino," but the words died away in an inarticulate murmur, and with a movement like flight she brushed hastily past him, and ran out into the darkness.

I had been the sole witness of this little unspoken drama, which I knew, according to Italian feeling on such matters, had the force of a mutual plighting of troth and confession of attachment, from the understanding it established between the parties. Such a mute pledge would be held no less binding than a distinct verbal promise, and Andrino, though he might defer to a more convenient season the formal demand of Ginevra's hand from her parents, was as much pledged, in his own eyes, to prosecute the courtship thus begun as if he had entered into a solemn act of betrothal. But I foresaw many difficulties in the path of the young couple before their vows could take effect, for I knew that Sora Nina was as proud and ambitious as a queen-mother, and regarded the little *contadina* much as King Cophetua's parents might have done the beggar-maid.

I heard her call after Ginevra on the stairs, to be ready to go with Maddalena to the five o'clock mass at Tereglio in the morning, that she might be back to assist her with the housework during the day. Knowing what I knew, I was not at all surprised that Andrino should select the same hour for his devotions; and as I came down in the morning, looking out of a certain staircase window that commanded the road to Tereglio, I had no difficulty in identifying the couple who were walking along it, with steps that lagged, so as to protract the way as much as possible. Maddalena had been in some time, and when poor little Ginevra arrived, all flushed and dewy with happiness, Nina turned on her like a viper. "My faith!" she cried ironically, "I hope you have not hurried yourself. How dare you trifle with me in this way, low peasant wench that you are! I will teach you your place another time." Her pale eyes glittered venomously, and

she looked as if she could have gladly killed her on the spot.

Andrino here stepped in from the yard. "Mother," he said, "you must not scold her, it was my fault. I walked home with her, and the morn was fine—we came slowly."

"And who gave you leave," she cried, turning on him in a white fury of jealousy and indignation, "to interfere between me and my maids! Are you master here already, that you take upon you to order the household? As for you, unmaidenly, unmannerly interloper, I never wished you inside my doors, and the sooner——"

"St—st, wife," said Vincenzo, who had come in from the yard unobserved, "that is enough; the child meant no harm."

Nina was silenced in a moment, for she knew that the stalwart farmer, who seemed in everyday matters the meekest and most amenable of men, was not to be contradicted on any point on which he chose to assert his authority. Ginevra escaped to her own room, and Nina, before starting for church, secured her, as she believed, against holding any communication with her son in her absence.

I have said that the three girls slept in the attics, on a roomy, rambling floor next the roof, generally used only for storage and lumber. In one large room, on a cloth spread on the floor, various fruits and vegetables were spread to dry or ripen; there were sorb-apples, so tempting to the eye when first gathered in their painted beauty of carmine and gold, but so bitter to the taste until softened to a pulpy sweetness in semi-decay; beside bunches of shriveled grapes lay coral-red tomatoes wrinkling as they dried; pale green gourds were mellowing to a riper tinge, purple aubergines glowing like dark red wine, and melon-seeds piled in little heaps here and there. On the walls were hung all manner of herbs—thyme and marjoram, sweet basil, sage, tansy, and wormwood, which, with bunches of withered camomile flowers, sprigs of lavender, and posies of centaury, gentian, and other mountain simples, filled the

air with a faint aromatic odor of decay. Against the further wall of this herbarium stood a splendid heir-loom, that might have sold in Wardour Street for thousands of francs—one of those massive chests of carved oak, in which the marriage outfit of the bride is generally stored, and which have remained in some of the good old peasant families for generations. This one was an admirable specimen of Renaissance workmanship, and I had often knelt to admire the high relief of the Bacchanalian procession with which it was adorned, like an antique sarcophagus. It was used, I knew, for storing the spare house-linen and other supplies not in actual use, but I had never seen it opened; and indeed, from the position in which it stood against the wall, it would have been impossible to lift the lid without first pushing it a little aside.

Off this lumber-room was the little closet now temporarily occupied by Ginevra, while the other two girls slept in another large attic across the passage. These rooms opened on a *loggia*, or covered gallery with open arches, overlooking the flagged court or threshing floor, and now festooned with bundles of chestnut leaves hung up to dry. An external staircase leading from this *loggia* to the one below, and thence to the ground, was the only mode of access to the attic floor, so that Sora Nina, locking the little wooden gate at the head of this staircase, and taking the key in her pocket, believed she had her prisoner firmly secured against all communication with the lower world till her return.

In this, however, she was mistaken, for she had not been gone more than a few minutes when, Maddalena having disappeared into an outhouse, I heard Andrino's voice below, calling softly to Ginevra to come down; and when she replied from above that she was locked in, it was but the work of a moment for the active young lover to stride up the stairs, two or three steps at a time, swing himself over the little gate, and establish himself on the open *loggia* for a long, happy hour, secure from interruption. I heard his first hurried greeting, "Ginevra! Ginevrina mia!" but after that their conver-

sation was carried on in a series of low murmurs, until the inexorable march of time compelled Andrino to return as he had come, just soon enough to escape being surprised by the party returning from church.

The household soon sat down to dinner, the women arrayed in their Sunday best, Nina in a handsome new gown of dark stuff, with an embroidered muslin kerchief, her toilet completed by a splendid set of massive gold ornaments, earrings, pins for the hair, and triple necklace of beads wrought by hand. Tuccia and Vannina, too, had their substantial holiday costumes, with brooches and earrings of solid gold.

"Where is Ginevra?" said the farmer, as he took his seat.

"Upstairs," answered his wife shortly.

"I will fetch her down," said Vincenzo resolutely, on which she silently handed him the key, and he went off, returning in a moment with the released culprit. Poor little Ginevra had no finery save a clean cotton frock, and her rich braids of hair were her sole ornament. She took her place silently, and scarcely tasted anything put before her. In the afternoon all scattered again; Tuccia and Vannina to their respective homes, Sora Nina to vespers and a gossip with friends in Tereglio; Vincenzo and his son to the café for a game of billiards and a lounge. Ginevra was again left at home, but at large, and had a visit from her father, Lorenzo Giuliani, who brought her a little bundle of clean things, and carried home her soiled ones for her mother to wash.

So Sunday passed, and Monday morning brought its usual routine of work. The chestnut gatherers were off to the woods at break of day, but Sora Nina staid at home, saying that she had household matters to look after. I was on the upper *loggia*, setting some canvases to dry, when she came up with a quick step, holding something under her apron, and without seeing me passed into the lumber attic, and thence to Ginevra's little room. She remained some few minutes, and on coming out (this time with her hands free) gave a start of surprise at seeing me. "Scusi, Signor Pittore,"

(this was my usual title in the household, except from Vincenzo, who, with a reminiscence of his American travel, always addressed me as "Mister"), "scusi if I have interrupted you, but I thought you had gone out. I had to bring up some of Ginevra's clothes, which she had left strewed about downstairs." Now this was a manifest falsehood, for I had seen Ginevra with my own eyes bring up her little bundle without opening it; but as it seemed a matter of little consequence, I kept my own counsel.

My way that morning led me through the chestnut woods. When I reached Sor Vincenzo's woods, the gathering was actively going on; Ginevra and Andrino were within sight of each other, but holding no communication, while Tuccia and Vannina, on a higher ledge just below the path, were chattering as usual. "I am wondering all this time," the latter was saying as I came by, "how Sora Nina will pay off the score she owes La Ginevrina. Sooner or later she will find the way, for La Nina has a tongue which cuts and sews (*che taglia e cuce.*)"

"You may trust her for that," said Tuccia; "and I, for one, shall not grudge the sly little upstart what she gets." Here she broke off, seeing me on the path above.

"Good-morning, girls," I called out. "How goes the harvest?"

"Bravely, Signor Pittore. Are you come to help?"

I assented, and spent the next half-hour gathering the fallen chestnuts, and making a great pile for Tuccia and Vannina to put into their bags, after which I went my way about my own pursuits. I did not return until late that evening, when I found that a great commotion had occurred in Casa Contrucci. Ginevra was gone, Andrino looked dark as a thunder-cloud, Vincenzo was perturbed and downcast, Nina pale but triumphant. The three latter left the kitchen after supper, and the two girls, who were bursting with the news, told me what had occurred.

Sora Nina's cherished gold ornaments had been stolen out of the great *cassettone* in the attic, and Ginevra was

the thief. Yes, I might shake my head and look incredulous, but in presence of them all her room had been searched, and the missing treasure found secreted in her bundle. She had, of course, protested her innocence, and, would I believe it, that credulous Andrino, who seemed perfectly infatuated about her, had stepped forward, declaring his unshaken faith in her, and his determination to make her his wife, even though his parents should refuse their consent, and he be compelled to go to America, like his brothers. But Ginevra (still, no doubt, playing injured innocence) thanked him, indeed, for his belief in her, but resolutely refused his offer, and declared that nothing would induce her to marry him while such a slur remained on her character, of which, she doubted not, Providence in its own good time would clear her. Then her fortitude had given way, and with the single exclamation "Ladra!" she had covered her face with her apron and burst into a storm of sobs. She had refused to let any one accompany her home, and started with her little bundle alone in the twilight. The last word they heard her say was, "Poor Babbo! but he will believe me at least."

Such was the story told me in breathless excitement by the two girls, whose spinning that evening added but little to Nina's hanks of yarn. I was still turning it over in my mind, side by side with certain doubts of my own, when Andrino came in from the court, and touched me on the shoulder, saying, "Signor Pittore, I pray you to come out with me a moment, I want to speak to you."

I followed him, and when we were both outside in the starlight, he began abruptly, "You know what has happened, but surely you do not believe she did it?"

"I do not know, Andrino," I replied, for I could not broach to him the vague suspicions floating through my mind. "Appearances are against her, but I still hope the thing may be cleared up."

"I would not believe it," he exclaimed passionately, "though all the world swore to it. My little Ginevra is as white as a dove." I could say but little to com-

fort the poor young fellow, and could only give him silent companionship, listening to his hopes and fears.

In truth, my own mind was much disturbed, and I slept but little that night. I had a great regard for the girl, whom I had known from her childhood, and I grieved to think of the forlorn figure she must have presented, with her slender bundle, flying like a scared, hunted creature through the twilight, and reaching the poor home, whose inmates had no boast save their good name. I had an innate conviction of her innocence, but could not see my way to establishing it. I alone knew of Nina's secret visit to her room that day, carrying something carefully concealed from view, and of the glib falsehood with which she had accounted for her presence there; but these circumstances, however strong a presumption of foul play they might afford to me who had witnessed them, would not be equally convincing to others, and I knew Nina's obstinate pride sufficiently well to be convinced that tortures would not wring a confession from her lips.

At break of day Lorenzo Giuliani arrived at the farm, haggard, wild, the picture of woe. Vincenzo poured out a tumbler of wine for him, and he gulped it down before his parched lips could frame a word. "This is sad news," he then said, "about my little girl. She has always been the best of little girls to me, and as sweet and open as the day—is it likely she should take a crooked turn all of a sudden?"

"I would give half my crops, this year, Lorenzo, that it had not happened," said the farmer, "and I would gladly give my best wheat field this moment to see it cleared up."

"What is there to clear up?" said Nina sharply, from the fire where she was busy cooking. "There is no use crying over spilt milk, Lorenzo. The girl is no worse than other girls, who can never resist the sight of jewelry. It will be a lesson to me to lock my handsome ornaments for the future when I have a *contadina* about the house."

"As for that, Sora Nina," said Lorenzo, "can you

tell me how she could expect to wear such things without being asked how she came by them, or of what use they would be to a girl like her? And it is not the first time, nor yet the second, that she has been in houses where gold and silver, aye, and jewels, too, were to be seen in plenty, and those that trusted her never found cause to repent it."

"There is no use in talking about it any more, Lorenzo," said she, "and you may thank your stars that it has passed over so quietly."

"But I will talk about it!" said Lorenzo, his temper now fully roused by her contemptuous manner, "and hear how it happened, too."

"Then hear it from others, not from me," she said flouncing out of the kitchen in a rage; "I wash my hands of it and you."

"Come, Lorenzo," said the farmer, "and I will show you where it occurred, and answer cheerfully as many questions as you like."

Nina's story was accordingly repeated to him as we went upstairs; how she had put the ornaments on Sunday night into the great oaken chest outside Ginevra's room, and going to it on Monday morning, found them gone.

"There it is," said Vincenzo, pointing to the massive sarcophagus, before which the despairing father knelt down, while the farmer, his son, the two girls, and I looked on, some in sympathy, some in curiosity. Suddenly we heard a rapturous exclamation from him, and thought the poor man's senses had given way under his misfortune.

"Praise be to Providence and all the saints! My little girl is cleared!"

Then, staggering to his feet with a sudden joy illuminating his haggard, unshaven face, he pointed his forefinger to the chest, and turned to us all. "Look at it!" he said, "but do not touch it! Let all the world see it! Oh, blessed creature of the good Creator, not one of your kind shall ever be harmed by me again, and I swear to cherish you henceforward as my own kith and kin!"

We looked where he pointed, and there, from the overhanging cornice of the lid of the great chest, to one of the curved pilasters at its corner, was expanded, in untouched filmy perfection, a venerable spider's web!

No other proof was needed of the falsity of Nina's story, for Solomon's seal itself could as little have been broken and restored since yesterday morn, as that fine, frail tissue of gossamer!

I now took the farmer aside and told him gently what I had seen of his wife's movements, proving that she alone had planned and executed the vile plot against the poor girl who had excited her jealousy on behalf of her son. I do not think Vincenzo was as much surprised as we were; such revelations are not always quite unexpected to the immediate family of the culprit. Nina, however, persisted in denial, and took refuge at last in obstinate silence.

It may be imagined that Lorenzo Giuliani lost no time in hastening home, and when Vincenzo and Andrino declared their intention of accompanying him, I could not resist the pleasure of being of the party. We flung ourselves headlong down the steep descent, but the valley seemed long, and the way tedious through the interminable chestnut woods, though it was still early when we arrived at the Casa Morgante on the banks of the Lima. Ginevra was at work hackling hemp before the door as we ascended the grass-grown steps of the gray old villa, and her face, which seemed to have shrunk since yesterday like a waning moon, and the large dark rings round her eyes, showed that she had shed many bitter tears since she had left the farm.

I am not sure but that she thought at first we had come to take her to prison, for she looked half-scared as we approached, and the good news, when it was told, was almost too much for her, after all she had gone through. When Sor Vincenzo turned to her father and said the only compensation he could make for the wrong she had suffered was to ask her hand in marriage for his son, "particularly," he added with a smile, "as Andrino has made up his mind about it long ago," she

burst into tears and ran away. She soon came back, however, all shy smiles and sunshine, and when Vincenzo and I returned to Tereglio, we left Andrino behind to enjoy a long holiday of courtship in the old garden, where Lorenzo's lemons were ripening their fairy gold on a southern wall, and hollyhocks and asters, and fair monthly roses, made a blaze of autumn glory in the October sun. The hard-worked mother, too, and the little brothers and sisters, had to take in all at once the wonderful intelligence that Ginevra was not only cleared of all suspicion, but was also advanced to the dignity of *sposa*, with the future glory of a farm of her own in store for her.

If her meek little heart could feel a thrill of pride, I think it must have been when her uncle in America, on hearing of her engagement, sent home a goodly sum of money to purchase her outfit, and she found that she was not to go to her husband's home like a poor peasant girl, but with all the appurtenances of a well-to-do rustic bride. Not even the miller's Ghita, whose preparations had been the envy of the whole country-side, went forth with a better stocked marriage-chest—with fuller plenishing of fine homespun linen, of delicate embroidered kerchiefs, of stout woolen stuffs, red and blue, ay, and of solid gold clasps and circlets too.

I do not think Sora Nina profited much by the lesson she had received, for she seemed as hard and stiff-necked as before, and could never be brought to see the enormity of what she had done. She pretended for a long time to be ignorant of what was going on, but had to yield to circumstances in the end, and receive her daughter-in-law with as good a grace as she might.

Nevertheless, I do not think Ginevra's position was altogether a comfortable one during the first months of her married life, until her activity, sense, and usefulness were recognized by Sora Nina, who, thoroughly capable herself and proud of her capacity, respected nothing so much as the same quality in others.

But Ginevra can never tell her children the story of the oaken chest, for it would alienate them forever from their grandmamma.

The Scripture saying, that "from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath," is exemplified in this touching, yet by no means sad, story by Guy de Maupassant. It has been especially translated for ROMANCE.

REVALIÈRE'S SACRIFICE.

THIS adventure happened to me in 1882. I had just taken my seat in a corner of an empty compartment in the car, and had closed the door, with the hope of remaining alone, when it was suddenly reopened, and I heard a voice say:

"Be careful, sir, the step is very high."

Another voice replied: "Don't be afraid, Lawrence. I will take hold of the handles."

Then a head appeared, covered with a round hat, and two hands, grasping the leather straps suspended at each side of the door, slowly hoisted a large body, whose feet made a noise on the car steps like that of a cane striking the ground. When the man had drawn his body into the car, I noticed the painted ends of two wooden legs.

A head appeared behind this traveller, and I heard its owner ask:

"Are you comfortable, sir?"

"Yes, my boy."

"Then here are your bundles and your crutches."

And a servant, who had the air of an old soldier, got into the car, bearing in his arms a lot of packages done up in black-and-yellow paper, carefully tied, and placed them one after the other in the network rack above his master's head. Then he said:

"There, sir, that is all. There are five bundles: the sweetmeats, the doll, the drum, the gun and the *pâtés de foie gras.*"

"That's all right, my boy."

"A pleasant journey, sir."

"Thank you, Lawrence."

The servant stepped down from the car, closed the

door and went away, while I observed my neighbor. He was, perhaps, thirty-five years old, although his hair was nearly white. He was decorated, wore a mustache, and had that pursy obesity of strong and vigorous men whom an infirmity obliges to remain inactive. He wiped his brow, puffed, and, looking me squarely in the face, said:

"Does smoking incommode you, monsieur?"

"Not at all," I replied.

I knew that eye, voice and face; but where and when had I seen them? I had certainly met this man, spoken to him and shaken his hand. It was long, long ago, lost in that haze where the mind seems to obscurely seek and pursue its souvenirs, like fleeting phantoms, without being able to grasp them.

My fellow-traveller now began to examine me with the tenacity and fixity of a man who recollects slightly but not entirely. Annoyed by this steady contact, our eyes turned away; then, after a few seconds, attracted by the obscure but persistent action of the memory, they again met and I remarked:

"Really, monsieur, instead of looking at each other stealthily for an hour, would it not be better to try and recall together where we have met?"

"You are quite right," replied my neighbor with good grace.

"My name is Henry Bonclair, magistrate," I added.

He hesitated a few seconds; then, with that vagueness of eye and voice which generally accompanies great tension of mind, he said:

"Ah, yes! I met you at the Poncels, before the war, a dozen years ago."

"Exactly. Ah! Ah! you are Lieutenant Revalière?"

"Yes, I was even Captain Revalière until the day when I lost my feet—both of them at a single stroke from a passing shell."

We looked at each other anew, now that we were acquainted.

I remembered perfectly well having seen this man when he was a fine-looking, slender fellow, who led the

cotillons with a nimble and graceful frenzy. But behind this figure there still floated something that I could not grasp,—some story that I had known and forgotten,—one of those stories to which one lends a kind and short attention and which leave only an imperceptible impression on the mind. There was love in it. I recalled the particular sensation from the depths of my memory, but nothing more.

Little by little, however, the shadows cleared away, and the face of a young girl rose before my eyes. Then her name, Mlle. de Mandal, flashed upon my mind. Now I remembered everything. It was, in fact, a love-story, but an ordinary one. This young girl loved this young man when I met them, and people spoke of their coming marriage.

I raised my eyes to the rack where all those bundles were trembling with the motion of the train, and the servant's voice returned to me as though he had just finished speaking. He had said:

"There, sir, that is all. There are five bundles: the sweetmeats, the doll, the drum, the gun and the *pâtés de foie gras.*"

In a second a romance was composed and unrolled in my mind. It resembled all the romances which one so often reads, in which the young man or the young woman marries his or her choice after overcoming all the obstacles. So this officer, mutilated during the war, had again found, after the campaign, the young girl who was pledged to him, and, keeping her engagement, she had married him.

I considered that to be beautiful, but simple, just as we judge to be simple all the heroic actions in books and at the theatre. When we read or listen at these schools of magnanimity, we always feel that we should have sacrificed ourselves with an enthusiastic pleasure and a magnificent impulse. But we are always in a bad humor on the following day, when a wretched friend comes to borrow money.

Suddenly, another supposition, less poetic and more realistic, replaced the first one. Perhaps this officer

had been married before the war, before this frightful accident that had cut off his feet, and his wife had been obliged, grieved and resigned, to receive, care for, console and sustain this husband who had started off strong and handsome, but who now returned, after having lost his feet, a frightful wreck, condemned to immobility, impotent anger and fatal obesity.

Was he happy or tortured? I was seized with an irresistible desire to know his history, or at least the principal points of it, which would permit me to divine what he could not or would not tell me.

I talked with him while thinking at the same time. We had exchanged a few commonplace remarks, and as I raised my eye to the rack, I thought to myself: "So he has three children; the sweetmeats are for his wife, the doll for his little girl, the drum and gun for his sons, and the *pâtés de foie gras* for himself."

Suddenly, I asked him: "You are a father?"

"No," he replied.

I felt confused, as though I had committed an impropriety, and continued:

"I beg your pardon. I thought you were, in hearing your servant speak of playthings. We often hear without listening, and draw conclusions, in spite of ourselves."

He smiled and murmured: "No, I am not even married. I stopped at the preliminaries."

I pretended to remember all at once. "Ah, that's true: you were engaged when I knew you,—to Mlle. de Mandal, I believe."

"Yes, monsieur, your memory is excellent."

I was excessively audacious, and added: "I also have a vague idea of having heard that Mlle. de Mandal married Monsieur—Monsieur——"

"Monsieur de Fleurel," he interrupted in a calm tone.

"Yes, that's it. I remember, even, to have heard about your wound."

I looked at him intently, and he blushed. His full, puffy face, already purple from the constant afflux of

blood, became still more highly colored. He replied with the animation and sudden ardor of a man who pleads a case lost in advance in his mind and heart, but who wishes to win it before public opinion:

"People are wrong in pronouncing Mme. de Fleurel's name with mine. When I returned from the war—without my feet, alas!—I should never have accepted her offer to become my wife. Was such a thing possible? When a woman marries, it is not to make a parade of generosity: it is to live every day, every hour, every minute and every second by the side of a man; and if this man is deformed, as I am, she condemns herself, in marrying him, to suffering that will last until death. Oh, I comprehend and admire all the sacrifices and all the devotions, when they have a limit! But I do not admit that a woman should renounce an existence which she hopes will prove happy, and abandon all her joys and dreams, for the sake of satisfying the admiration of the gallery. Do you believe that a man can induce a woman to tolerate what he himself cannot support? And, besides, do you think that my wooden feet are attractive?"

M. Revalière became silent. What could I say to him? I felt that he was right. Could I blame her, scorn her or even admit that she was wrong? No. However, the dénouement, which conformed to the rule, to the average, to truth and probability, did not satisfy my poetic appetite. These heroic stumps called for a noble sacrifice that was wanting, and I experienced a profound deception.

"Has Mme. de Fleurel any children?" I asked him suddenly.

"Yes, a daughter and two sons. These toys are for them. She and her husband have been very kind to me."

The train mounted the incline at Saint Germain, passed through the two tunnels and entered the station. I was about to offer my arm to help the mutilated officer alight, when two hands were stretched toward him through the open door.

"Good morning, my dear Revalière."

"Ah! good morning, Fleurel."

Behind the man was a woman, smiling radiantly and throwing her "good morning" with her gloved fingers. A little girl by her side jumped with joy, and two youngsters looked with eager eyes at the drum and gun that their father was taking down from the rack.

When the disabled man was upon the platform, all the children kissed him. Then the crowd started off, the little girl holding in her hand the varnished support of the crutch, as she would have been able to hold, in walking at his side, the thumb of her big friend.

The artist is traditionally poor in this world's goods, though the author of the following story, written for ROMANCE by Miss Annetta Josefa Halliday, has chosen to endow her hero more amply than most of them. The artist should be proud and happy, however, that he is so often chosen by our writers as the hero of their romances. He may be poor in this world's goods, but he is somehow surrounded with a poetic glamour, and the pretty girls surrender their hearts to him with surprising unanimity.

THE FROST-LILY.

MIDSOMMER WAKA had come. This is the greatest festival of the year among the Norse peasantry, and in Vik, the cluster of little houses, which nestle in the bend of a great fjord, the vigil of St. John's Eve was kept with dancing, and drinking and song. The old belief of the Northmen, that those born near the sound of many waters are endowed with a natural gift of music, made the Vik fiddlers sought far and wide for the June merry-makings of St. John's fête; and before many houses in the little village the Wolmar fire burned brightly in token of the noisy betrothal within.

Somewhat removed from the gayety and revels of the night, the small white dwelling of old Liof Thure nestled in the long grasses full of clover-blooms, with a gravel-pathed garden at one side, overflowing with old-fashioned pink and white rose-trees; and a long white fence at the other, leading down to a quay and the tossing green fjord, which looked violet-black in the shadows of the night.

The family of Thure was an old one, and had lived in this same spot for generations, looking at the grand, gray, fir-clad mountains and the wild, moss-grown boulders, and listening to the wash of the great water against the little landing-stage. The present occupants of the place were old Liof, who had never known a day's variation from his accustomed routine in his lifetime; his six yellow-haired, strong-limbed sons, who

looked like nothing so much as pictures of the old Norse Vikings; and the pride of her father's heart, sweet, imperious Gerda, the acknowledged beauty of Vik, who looked at him with her mother's eyes and face, and spoke to him in the tones of the woman whose life had gone out eighteen years ago when she gave to her husband the girl-baby for whom he had so longed.

Gerda was wilful and spoiled and tantalizing. Her brothers had long lost all patience with her because she had laughed in the face of every honest fellow who would have married her, and because she loved many strange things that had no beauty to the sons of Liof Thure; the magpies, which are as much a part of Norse scenery as the invariable birches and pines; the blue gentians of the snow-capped heights; the yellow and white water-lilies of the Norwegian tarns, and the lady-ferns, which the first cold snow-winds of winter tinged with bright scarlet. She gave to the wind and the weather the love that should have been a husband's, and worshipped the swift, wild rain which made the moss and ferns so lovely, and the flushing of the waters and the brilliant heavens above them when the sun went down. She loved to paddle her boat idly about the shores of the fjord, watching the colors deepening in the sky, and the gloom which spreads itself over all nature as the day dies, when she should have been merrymaking instead, with some Norse lover, after the fashion of her people.

Of admirers, who would have willingly become something dearer, she had had more than any other maiden in Vik. She was bright with an intelligence far beyond the average Scandinavian girl, such as was that of Hörberg, the peasant-painter of Sweden. She loved nature with the unconsciousness of the Greek and the passion of the German; but she was practical and well-skilled in the arts which attract a Norse husband. She could prepare the flesh of the reindeer most deliciously with cream, which is used so lavishly in Norwegian cookery; she knew the concoction of each of the many cheeses beloved of the Scandinavian; she could bake

great round rye-cakes a foot and a half in diameter, and so flavor and dry them for the winter that they were like confections; and the large attic chamber of her father's house was hung around with her wardrobe, most of which was her own handiwork,—snow-white wool aprons with brilliant red borders, linens, colored prints, embroidered bodices, deer-skin coats, snow-shoes and winter-boots; for Liof was a well-to-do peasant, and had brought up his daughter in the belief that plenty and cleanliness in the matter of raiment elevated the Norwegian woman above her Swedish sister.

But to-night there was no sound of joy from the white house so close to the fjord. No light gleamed from the windows, and a hush seemed to have settled over the place, in marked contrast to the revels of the neighborhood. Sweet-smelling odors of fragrant new-made hay filled the air, and a savage-looking cow, which wore a collar and a tinkling bell, was just wandering home from the far-off fields, and was the only sign of life about the Thure homestead.

Old Liof had gone for a visit with two Norwegians just returned from a fifteen-years' sojourn in the western states of America. They found old Norway very slow after the nervous bustle of the new world. The boys were making the most of their holiday, and had trudged away early in the morning, each bearing gifts to his sweetheart. Gerda had persistently refused to join in the pleasures of the festival of St. John, and had strayed out this delicious night, going from boulder to boulder, until she had clambered nearly to the top of the mountain through the lichen, whortleberries and ferns.

She had moped all day, said the great, rough brothers, Olaf and Byn and Nils and Brun and Rolf; while Jarl, the youngest and more nearly in sympathy with his sister, had watched her wistfully when she was among the red-currant bushes of the garden and whispered softly to his brothers: "She will never forget him!"

One year before, upon this very St. John's eve, the little steamer which came tri-weekly from the Norse capital, bringing with it a breath of the great world,

in the shape of tourists who found fjord-travelling a charming novelty, had stopped at the little quay nearest to Liof Thure's dwelling, late in the afternoon, when the purest of purple shadows were lying over the lake.

Gerda stood waiting for its arrival, and the mate handed to her a small parcel, which from its size and shape one could easily guess contained a pair of new shoes.

"Great Heavens, what a lovely girl!" exclaimed a voice in English as the boat moved away, and, looking upward at the steamer's tiny deck, Gerda saw a man whose dark eyes spoke to her plainly the sentiments which her Norse ear failed to comprehend.

The superb fringes of her large, dark-blue eyes drooped as she walked away. He was an artist and an American, of that she was sure, for he had had sketch-book and pencil in hand, and bore about him the general air of assurance which characterizes the American at home and abroad. She had seen many of them who had passed through Vik, finding a constant interest in the exquisite scenery of the fjord, and the mountains of the water-falls and the stretches of green slope, with the hay stacked on the wooden fences to dry; she smiled again the next afternoon when she turned her boat homeward after a long ramble, and remembered his tone and glance.

The evening was coming on, and the setting sun tinged the snow-tops a faint pink, while the green grass on the mountain-side was covered with white daisies, like a powder of pearls. Her boat was filled with harebells and purplish heath-plants and ferns and mignonette, and as she reached the small wooden bridge which stretched across an arm of the fjord, she saw a stranger leaning upon the rail and watching her. It required no second glimpse to assure the Norse girl that it was he whose admiration of her had been so outspoken upon the steamer the night before. In a moment he was at her side.

"Let me help you," he exclaimed as she gathered the boat's fragrant freight in her arms, after making the

tiny craft fast, and although the tongue in which he spoke was a stranger to her, she needed no dictionary to interpret his actions as he walked homeward beside her, and easily persuaded old Liof Thure to accommodate him as a boarder.

He was a landscape-student from New Orleans, with dreams and a great ambition, and he had come to paint the wild beauties of the Norse scenery and the glinting sunshine which laughed through the tall, swaying pines.

For six months he had lived in the family of Liof Thure, and had acquired enough of the Norwegian to tell them of the distant city of his birth, of his hopes, and his prospects and his friends. He had learned to listen with the keenest pleasure to the sweet voice of Gerda during the long days and evenings, when she explained to him the lore of her country and the folk-tales of the North,—of the castle of the pirate Erik, and the three hunters turned to stone,—of the mystery of the parsley bed and the milk-white deer and the white worm of the witches; and how the spectre-cross in the enchanted garden frightened the Finnish sorcerers. Gerda and he had taken long strolls together over the gray mountains and the little green patches of field where peasant-girls in scarlet and blue were raking the grass; or they had wandered to the village at evening and watched the boats heaped high with hay coming in, or the fishing-smacks gliding lazily out to sea; and Gerda would tell the stranger how the rose-colored haresfoot was dyed with the blood of Charles XII.; or of the black stork that built its nest among the anemones and dog-violets of the marshes; and how a stalk of clover worn by a man was a sure charm against women with false complexions, hair and teeth; and the American, looking at the cheeks of his companion, which were dashed with a color richer than the freshest peach-bloom, had laughed and thrown away the trefoil in his buttonhole as he told her in broken Norse that it was needless.

And as the days went by, the idea of a picture which should show the beauty of Gerda to the world filled his

brain, and the hours when she posed to him as a model passed too swiftly for them both.

There was no word of love between them, but day by day the American saw the sweet womanliness of this Northern girl, the rich nature still undeveloped, though responsive with poignant feeling to each vibration of his own artistic soul, the spirit of true life, unfettered with the contractions and ceremonies of conventionality, a life high and wide, like the blue Scandinavian heaven above; he saw all this, he felt the inspiration of this continual contact with nature, and yet he did not tell her that his whole heart was hers, because of the elder brother across the sea, who would have deemed it an unchangeable blot upon many generations of financial prosperity, that the sole sharer with himself of many American dollars should marry a Norse peasant-girl.

Finally the picture was completed. There was the wide fjord stretching out to the ocean with silence and solitude on its waves, which caught the blood-red reflections of an angry sky. There was not a vessel in sight, and so well had the artist caught the spirit of the scene that the slow, majestic sweep of the heaving rollers seemed to die out without breaking, and to give place to others, and against the gathering darkness the exquisite slenderness of a woman's figure stood clear cut upon the canvas. She wore a white skirt and white bodice, the dainty sleeves revealing more than half of the round, dimpled arms, which hung down and were clasped in front of her; the skirt fell full to the ankle, and the firm, well-shaped feet were bare upon the moss-grown shore; from the white cap upon her head the great braids of pale-gold hair extended below the waist line; the eyes, which were of the purple blueness of water of great depth, looked outward over the waves, and the whole face expressed subdued force and sweet seriousness. It was the portrait of a woman whose heart knew not yet the thrill of love, but had experienced the sadness of some undefined longing.

It was a matchless picture, a masterpiece of the artist's power; and as he mixed his colors and labored over it,

but one name seemed suitable to the American as he thought of Gerda. "So pure, so fresh, so cold!" he had said to himself; and when old Liof Thure first saw the painting and read the name of "The Frost-Lily," he was quick to grasp its significance and to realize what had prompted the stranger in his house to call the gem of his Norse Collection by the title of the most prized and the most unattainable of the Scandinavian flora.

"It dies when they take it from the snow-bitten waters of its mountain tarns," thought the old man sadly, "Does he think to take her away from me to the country across the waters? The child would die in those great cities!"

But he was wise in his way and said nothing, although he could have chosen for his Gerda one of the white-skinned, serpent-eyed Northmen of her own race. Brown eyes and hair and beard did not accord with the Scandinavian ideas of freedom and manliness.

"Be a black slave!" was the old Norse curse. Gods and goddessess had light hair and a pure color; the thralls were black; and while the Americo-Norman has yielded up his prejudices against the brunette tinting, the delicacy of the fair skin is still thought a sign of better blood, a token of the free-born, in the Scandinavian peninsula.

When every detail of the picture had been made as perfect as brush and colors and the critical taste of the artist could render it, the American packed up his palettes and canvases, and bade good-by to the snug farm-house where he had eaten and slept and worked for so many months. When he said farewell to Gerda, it was in the presence of her father and brothers; there was a close quick pressure of the hand, and he had jumped into the sledge which was waiting to speed him over the frozen snow away from his love to the nearest station of the continental trains.

That was nearly half-a-year ago; and through all the long months tidings had come from him but once, when he had sent a great medal of gold which the picture had taken in some famous exhibition, with the words,

"Gerda, in remembrance of Ralph." And it was upon all this that Gerda was thinking, this anniversary of their meeting, as she strayed aimlessly upon the mountain side, and listened to the merry voices singing upon the fjord below, or the rush of some mountain stream, not far from her feet.

She paused a moment, and looked downward, taking off her cap and pushing back the rebellious locks of thick, soft hair with which the breeze loved to play upon her temples. It was a quarter-to-ten, and only half darkness; there was a sweet, fresh smell of fir and pine wood, and whiffs from the drying hay in the air, while the moon had risen, outlining the mountain-shapes in deep violet and black; the colored lights, red and white and green, which the villagers were burning gleamed in the soft dusk.

As Gerda turned to descend the hillside, a little boat darted out from the shadows of the fjord, and rowed swiftly through the long path of silver light which the moon rays threw upon the waters. The road down the mountain so wound about that at intervals it commanded a view of the fjord, so Gerda saw the boat near the shore as she herself approached the valley. To the rower she paid little heed, simply noting that he wore the holiday costume of the Norse peasant, in scarlet and brown.

As the boat shot under the bridge, toward the pier, the man looked upward with a glad cry.

"Gerda!" said he, "Gerda, don't you know me?"

As the keel grasped upon the shore, he leaped from the boat and held his two hands out for hers.

"Dear-Eyes," he exclaimed in the Norse love-words, "Do you love me?"

And what did Dear-Eyes do but nestle with a great throb of content against his heart!

"I have come straight from New Orleans to you," he cried. "It is one year ago to-night since I first saw you, and I could not stay away another day. I stopped yesterday to buy this costume which is to be mine in the future, Gerda, and then I came on to you, sweet-

heart, to be with you always if you will have me." He paused an instant, to press her head to his shoulder tenderly before he continued: "I could not ask you to leave everything that has made you what you are, and go across the seas with me. There is nothing about you that I would change for the world, and so I am come to you, Gerda. When we are married, we will live right here in this pure air and amid all this grand scenery; our life shall be the same simple, primitive one that has made you the woman I love. I am a Norseman hereafter for your sake!"

Gerda looked into his eyes with rapturous fondness. The moon hung in the dark blue ether, like a round shield over woods and hills and waters, flooding the mountain path with ghostly shadows and silvery light, and as the soft beams fell upon her and etherealized her beauty, the American held her to him in an ecstasy of tenderness.

"Have you nothing to ask me, Dear-Eyes?" he murmured, as he pressed his cheek against hers. "Have you nothing to ask me of the home or friends or family I have left?"

"No," answered Gerda, "I have you, and I love you so that there is no room for any other interest in my heart!"

Life's golden paradise opened for them, and unquestioning and content they entered in.

Two days later, the following cablegram was sent to Horace Clifford, Esq., of New Orleans.

Vik, Norway, June 25.

DEAR BROTHER:

I have gathered the Frost-Lily, but shall not transplant it. When you do Europe next year, come and see us, and you shall have some of the finest salmon fishing in the world.

Always affectionately,

RALPH.

At this season of the year the heart of the housewife wearies of old furnishings, and she starts forth to refit and refurbish her home. This amusing sketch by Julia Schayer, first published in the *Home-Maker*, tells how one woman of moderate means managed to acquire a bookcase.

THAT BOOKCASE.

We had moved into a new house, and, as is usual in such cases, found ourselves needing a great many things we had not needed in the old one; among other things, we needed book-shelves. We had not been buying more books, and all the shelves we ever had had been brought along; yet, by some mysterious hocus-pocus, after all were filled, there remained numbers of odd volumes lying about in all sorts of precarious and inconvenient places.

Richard, head of the house, had appeared impervious to the delicate hints thrown out in his presence; yet *something* must be done, and quickly.

"There is nothing that gives a room such a delightfully *livable* look as plenty of well-filled book-shelves," remarked my daughter, Victoria, a young woman of eighteen, who has inherited that visionary turn of mind with which I have nobly and unsuccessfully struggled for so many years.

As she said it, she was standing in a graceful pose with her eyes dreamily fixed upon a niche between the dumb-waiter and the chimney-piece, and I knew she was in imagination filling out that space with nice ebonized shelves all neatly edged with pinked leather and rows of brass-headed nails, and hung with a pretty silken curtain. So was I, or rather with something a little less fine, but more attainable. I don't think Victoria was prepared for my response.

"Suppose we *make* a book-case?"

Victoria stared.

"*Make* a book-case?" she repeated. "Do you know what you are talking about?"

"I do," I calmly answered. "Let us first consider what is a bookcase, or rather, a set of book-shelves? An object, a structure, let us say, composed of boards sawed or otherwise fashioned into appropriate shapes, fastened together by nails, and, finally, stained or varnished. Is there anything mysterious, or occult, or even elaborate about an ordinary set of book-shelves? Given the raw material, what is needed to produce the desired result?"

"A cabinet-maker, I should say," said my daughter, "or at least a carpenter."

"And what *is* a cabinet-maker or a carpenter?" I persisted. "You forget that in the beginning every man was his own carpenter. The germ, the rudiment, of a carpenter lies dormant in us all. In other words, every man——"

"Is a sort of mute, inglorious carpenter," interpolated Victoria.

"And every woman;" I went on, ignoring the interruption, "for the female of every species——"

"Don't!" broke in Victoria again. "This is not a meeting of 'The Woman's Anthropological Society.' Go on and tell in plain English how you propose to make a book-case."

"In plain English, then," I responded, "I propose to buy the raw material, borrow Mrs. Macafferty's handsaw—we have a hammer, and with your assistance construct a book-case, or a set of shelves, which, though probably lacking in some non-essential points, will answer all reasonable purposes."

Victoria did not oppose me: people seldom do. We immediately set about making the necessary calculations. I made the measurements, which Victoria jotted down on her tablets. We found that we should need twenty-eight feet of boards eight inches wide for the sides and shelves, twelve feet of narrow strips for the rests, and a few nails. We had some walnut stain left over from the floors, and we had a hammer of our own; and, as I have said, I hung my hopes of a saw on the obliging Irish grocer-woman at the corner.

The next morning I went to the nearest lumber-yard, and stated my wants to a red-eyed young man who was yawning over a ledger in the office.

"I want some boards," I began.

"What yer want 'em *for?*" asked the young man, with a suspicious look.

"To make book-shelves," I meekly answered.

"Who's goin' to make 'em?" again asked the young man, with a hideous yawn.

It may seem strange, but it never entered my head to wonder what this red-eyed young lumberman had to do with that side of the case, and I answered humbly, for I cannot tell a lie, "I, and my daughter."

The look which the young man bestowed upon me would have aroused the self-respect of a door-mat. Just as I was on the point of making a remark calculated to reduce that horny-handed son of toil to his proper place, the telephone call sounded, and, leaving me standing where I was, he went leisurely over to that instrument and engaged in one of those one-sided conversations so curiously interesting to an outsider. It was about as follows:

"Mouldin's? Ya'as. Why in——didn't he say so?"

Aside, evidently reflecting on the intellectual powers of third party referred to.

"My orders was for cherry, I tell ye!"

Aside, containing frightful suggestions concerning the immortal part of third party.

"How much d'ye want?"

Aside, referring in disgraceful terms to the ancestry of third party.

"All right, *I'll send* it down."

It was quite exciting to listen to: it might have been even more so, had the remarks interpolated gone over the wire also.

Presently the young man lounged back to his desk, and surveyed me a moment in a dazed sort of fashion.

"Oh," he suddenly exclaimed, "you wanted some shelvin's, what kind?"

I had no idea, but answered with calm dignity:

"The kind generally used."

The young man looked at me with undisguised, though mild, contempt.

"Some uses white pine, some yaller pine, some poplar, some ash, some walnut, some cherry——"

"I don't want anything expensive," I explained. "We are going to stain the shelves."

"Wall, I guess white pine shelvin' is good enough."

He did not say "for two women to fool with," but I am morally certain it was in his mind. I followed him into a huge shed piled high with lumber, and he began pulling out boards.

"I want them smooth," I suggested.

"Dressed," corrected the young man. Then he yawned so that for a whole moment the shed was obscured. I thought the boards never would be forthcoming, he was obliged to repeat that process so often; but we came to terms finally, and paying the young man the sum of $1.10, I exultantly departed, leaving him engaged in another lurid telephonic conversation with his invisible adversary.

Yet in justice to this misguided young lumber-dealer, I must say that he proved himself not wholly without feeling, for just as I turned to go, he relented sufficiently in his supercilious treatment of me to throw out a valuable suggestion.

"You'd better git *wire* nails," he remarked between two more yawns.

I shall always keep a warm corner in my grateful heart for that young man, for I know what that suggestion saved me from in the way of mashed fingers and moral deterioration. Those wire nails are a great invention.

With five cents worth of them in my pocket I returned home. The boards and strips had preceded me, and were in the basement awaiting our efforts. Emmeline, our colored maid-of-all-work, was despatched to fetch Mrs. Macafferty's hand-saw. When she arrived with it, it looked very formidable. It was at least three feet long, and proportionally broad; but I re-

membered having sawed wood "for fun" when I was a child, and thought I could manage it.

A box was dragged into the middle of the cellar, and the shortest of the boards, twelve foot long, laid over it. Having carefully drawn a pencil line across the middle, Victoria seated herself on the board, and I attempted to saw.

"*C'est le premier pas qui coûte,*" say the French, and said I, too, as in spite of me that saw began dancing over the board like a live thing, inflicting dreadful little jags and bruises on its surface, and seriously jeopardizing the drapery of Victoria where she sat curiously watching my movements. The antics that saw went through were simply amazing. It reminded me of a spirited horse that feels a woman's hand on his bridle for the first time. But I am proud to say that I got it under control at last, and sawed straight through the board in a masterly manner.

"Oh," said Victoria with a nervous laugh, as the process was going on, "it feels awful funny! Like having your foot asleep, or taking an electric shock."

Every now and then Emmeline came and cast a disapproving eye on our proceedings. Your colored lady is a great conservative, and I have no doubt that Emmeline suspected Victoria and myself of the most advanced and reprehensible sentiments, and that we lost caste with her thenceforth.

The two sides of the book-case being now ready, we proceeded to saw the strips into eight-inch lengths for the shelves to rest on.

Before this job was completed, Victoria was almost in hysterics. Once she decided that she would prefer to saw, but after a brief and spirited tussle with that instrument, returned to her former position, sadder and wiser.

By the time the strips were ready it was twelve o'clock, and Dick, my boy, aged nine, came home from school. Of course he was seized with a desire to have a hand in the business, and Victoria at once resigned in his favor, and went up to the dining-room to nail the

short pieces to the sides, which had to be done before the top and bottom pieces were nailed on.

Then Dick took up the position abdicated by his sister, and I set about sawing the sixteen-foot board into short lengths for the shelves, having previously measured off and marked the distances in the most workman-like manner. I was pretty well worn-out by this time, but I meant to have those shelves sawed off before lunch, and struggled to finish the job.

I missed Victoria. It was not only her avoirdupois that was wanting, but her moral support as well; for in spite of "feeling funny" and getting hysterical now and then, she had stuck to her post with true Casabianca heroism. Dick, on the contrary, wriggled, squirmed, screamed with laughter, fell off the board several times, tried standing up on it, and ended in open rebellion and tears.

If any one is disposed to condemn Dick, let him try sitting on a board laid across an empty box while an undeveloped carpenter saws that board in two. As is well-known, when a woman sets out to be cruel, she beats the record, and I blush now to own that I kept poor Dick undergoing this torture *peine et dure* until the last shelf fell to the ground. Then we went up to lunch. I took one of the shelves along to be sure that I *had* measured rightly. I held it up against the wall; it seemed to be just right.

"There is nothing like accuracy," I carelessly remarked, as I laid the shelf on the floor of the niche. That is, I tried to do so, but it would not lie down. I had measured too high. I had allowed nothing for the floor boards. The shelves were all too long, and there were seven of them.

I did not enjoy my lunch. Neither did Dick. Those seven shelves with their superfluous inches rested heavily on our spirits. Victoria, on the contrary, was in high feather, though to do her justice she did not *say* much, and did offer to relieve Dick, but gave up the attempt at the first shelf, and that hapless urchin accordingly passed another *mauvais quart d'heure.*

"It feels like I was a crazy-bone all over," whined Dick.

"It will soon be over," I cheerfully urged. Then, more severely: "How will you ever be a great soldier or a great explorer, if you cannot bear a little discomfort? Think of what General Greely and his men suffered, and Stanley. Think of poor Stanley!"

"Yes," responded Dick illogically, "and think of all they've got for it! The Government isn't going to make *me* a general, or give *me* a heap of money, for just sitting on a board and having my insides jiggered to pieces!"

Where *do* boys in respectable families acquire so many vulgar expressions?

At last it was over, and Dick and I, with our physical systems all in a quiver, took the pieces up into the dining-room. Victoria was waiting for us, and it did not take long to nail on the end pieces, which were, by the way, sawed just the thickness of the boards longer than the others. Then with exultation in our souls we stood the thing on end. It was a tall, narrow case, and I regret to say it wobbled fearfully the moment it found itself upright. It evidently had no confidence in itself, and of course *our* confidence in *it* was shaken.

"It reminds me of a girl I knew at school," said Victoria, trying not to laugh. "She was thirteen and taller than the teacher, and he was a tall man. She lopped and wobbled around just like this."

Then we both sat down and laughed until we cried, still holding on to the bookcase.

"This will never do," I said finally. "Some way, somehow, this thing must be finished and in its place before your father sees it. You know how he ridiculed the idea."

By which it will be seen that my vaulting ambition and sublime confidence had suffered already a decline.

We set the thing—we had ceased to speak of it as a bookcase by this time—into the niche, and one of us slid in the shelves, while the other held on. They went

in beautifully, but still the thing would not stand on its own responsibility.

"Something is the matter with its centre of gravity," said Victoria.

"It *hasn't* any," I averred.

I shall never know what ailed the thing. In appearance it did not differ from a hundred other bookcases I have seen before and since, constructed by amateur carpenters, but the fact remains that the instant we took our hands from it, it began to pitch forward.

"It will have to be fastened back to the wall, somehow," I said, in desperation.

So Victoria held on to it while I went for the step-ladder, and some picture nails, and some wire, and some hooks, and some rings, and some screws, and the hammer, and the screw-driver, and a gimlet. Then I mounted the ladder and went to work.

At the end of half an hour both strength and ingenuity were exhausted, and all I had to show for it were several big holes in the wall and a variety of bent and broken nails, screws, etc. The lacerated state of my moral nature I will pass over.

Victoria still clung heroically to the toppling structure. The situation was becoming desperate. A *coup d'état* was called for.

"I have it!" I cried at length. "We will nail it to the dumb-waiter! When the books are in no one will see it."

Three long nails secured the thing to the dumb-waiter and it was wonderful what a difference it made. The thing really began to hold up its head and look us in the face, and we stopped speaking of it as a thing, and gave it its original title again.

Next came the staining. Victoria, being the artist of the family, was entrusted with this delicate task—delicate, because it must be done without smearing the wall at the back.

"Why *didn't* we do it before we nailed it up?" moaned Victoria.

"Because then we should have had to wait for it to

dry, and your father would have seen it in all its ghastly incompleteness."

The reply was satisfactory.

When my husband came home that evening, he found me a physical wreck (though of course I took care that he should not discover *that* fact), and the bookcase stood firmly in its niche in all its brazen impudence and spurious dignity. The stained surface looked very well by gas-light, and Richard's eyes not being good, he did not discover these nails that held it in place. A brass placque and a vase filled with heather and grasses from the Rhine had been artfully placed on the top shelf, so he did not discover the holes in the plastering either, but viewed the grand result with mingled surprise and amazement.

"Do you think you could have done better?" I haughtily inquired.

"Well—I think I could have nailed the strips on a little more evenly," responded my better half.

Perhaps he would have done so. I *had* noticed a deviation or two from the straight line, but Victoria had kept herself so well in hand when my mistake in measurement came to light, that I had not felt like saying anything.

Before breakfast the next morning I had the shelves filled with books, and really, no one would believe how well that bookcase looked. My husband shows it to everyone who comes in with an air of ostentatious pride, that under the circumstances is highly entertaining.

Victoria and I are often compelled to retire to conceal our unhallowed mirth. We know too well that the bookcase is a sham, a fraud, depending upon three wire nails for its perpetuity, and we try to harden our hearts and say, "What does a sham or two more or less matter in this world of shams?" But there are moments when the insincerity of that bookcase, the brazen front it presents to the beholder, strike us with disgust; and a guilty consciousness of being participators in an undiscovered crime destroys our enjoyment of the humor of the thing.

This dramatic little story is by Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, and first appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. Daughters and mothers of daughters may intimate that Amund's troubles were not undeserved.

THE LITTLE CHAP.

THE Little Chap had been humored from the time he was born, but then he was such a fascinating Little Chap that nobody could help humoring him. He was stubborn, he was headstrong, he was naughty, if you like, the Little Chap; but in his very naughtiness there was something really captivating, which won your heart, but played the mischief with your dignity. When he stood before you with his legs far apart, his hands in the pockets of his much-patched trousers, and the magnitude of his defiance so out of proportion to that of his tiny body, you were altogether at a disadvantage, and I am not sure but that the Little Chap in the innocent slyness of his heart felt that you were at his mercy. A little patched cherub like him, with tousled blond hair and an enormous sense of his own importance, would have been no mean antagonist to Hercules himself; and so secure was he in the consciousness of his valor that he would not have been afraid to tackle Hercules.

The Little Chap's father, Amund Myra, was a carpenter by trade, and lived in one of the loneliest mountain valleys of Norway. His wife, Kari, had presented him with five daughters before it occurred to her to present him with a son, and his joy at the last arrival had only been equalled by his disgust at the five previous ones. The Little Chap took instant possession of his father's heart, which had been kept purposely vacant for his reception. When the nurse brought him on the evening of his arrival upon a pillow, and placed him across Amund's knees, the carpenter freely forgave his wife her five past delinquencies in consideration of the Little Chap. For this was not the usual infantile vege-

table that simply fed and slept. It was a quaint and sturdy little personality, that took in the world, his father included, with a slow, wondering gaze, and seemed to do a vast deal of profound and solemn thinking. Amund could not rid himself of the impression that his son viewed him rather critically, as if he were debating with himself whether, on the whole, he liked his appearance and found him a fairly satisfactory parent. He was very much afraid that he did not come up to the Little Chap's standard; he was absurdly anxious to make as favorable an impression as possible. There was something peculiarly wise and venerable in the Little Chap's aspect as he lay there upon the pillow. "What tremendous secrets that Little Chap must know, mused his father, "if he only chose to divulge them—secrets of the sun and the moon and the great unknown from whence he came!"

And thus it happened that from the hour of his arrival the Little Chap came to be regarded as a person of tremendous consequence. It was impressed upon him from the time he lay in the cradle that he was a boy, and that a boy was a superior kind of creature, who had nothing except certain accidental points of anatomy in common with girls, which latter species had been wisely created by the Lord to wait upon him. He was not very big before Amund, who could not bear to be separated from him, got into the habit of taking him along when he went out into the valley to do a job. There the Little Chap would sit proudly perched upon his father's shoulder, bundled up in scarfs, and with a fur cap that was much too big for him pulled down over his ears. He was not a talkative child; but there was a slow and old-fashioned kind of gravity about him which made everything he said infinitely droll. He took himself very seriously, and allowed no trifling with his dignity. He took much satisfaction in the thought that he was helping his father; and Amund rather encouraged the idea, giving him a hammer with which he pounded nails into a piece of board, and occasionally mashed his fingers. And all day long, while the car-

penter worked, whether in-doors or out-of-doors, the Little Chap bustled about him, sat in the shavings whittling sticks, or chipped the edge of the plane by running it into the heads of the nails, which he drove in wherever a convenient place presented itself. But whatever mischief he got into, whatever tools he ruined, Amund regarded it only as a fair price which he paid for his company. And never once did he scold the Little Chap, but gravely explained to him why he must not do such and such things, as if he had been a grown-up man. And the Little Chap would listen gravely, with a quivering underlip; and when the kindly homily was at an end, he would lie very still, with his head buried in the shavings, feeling terribly humiliated at the thought of his delinquency. The next day, when Amund started out, carrying his tools in a bag on his back, the Little Chap would meet him at the door, and with a dubious and anxiously expectant look would ask:

"May I help you to-day, dad?"

"Yes, Little Chap, you shall help me to-day," Amund would answer, heartily, as he lifted him up on his shoulder. "How could dad get along without his Little Chap?"

Many a time, too, when his comrades whistled for him under the window, and he was sorely tempted to accept the invitation to join in their games, the thought would occur to him that his dad needed his help; and gravely he would go to the door, and, with a droll sense of responsibility, explain that he had to help his dad.

Thus winters passed, and summers, until the Little Chap was eight years old. He tyrannized over his sisters, as usual, and accepted their worship as nothing but his due. He was a sore trial to his mother on account of his stubbornness, and because he was "so hard on his clothes." But to his father he was a stanch and loyal friend; I could almost say an older friend, for he began early to feel a kind of responsibility for Amund, and a droll kind of protectorship. He made him go back and put on his coat when he started out in his shirt sleeves in chilly weather; he would send him back to

shave, of a Sunday morning, when he proposed to go to church with a two days' beard; and he would take his dad's part at the table when the mother would scold him or make unpleasant remarks implying disrespect.

"Mother always thinks that everybody can do things better than my dad," he would observe, in his slow drawl, when his dad had been unlucky enough to arouse his wife's displeasure; and straightway dad would feel a little horny paw under the table grasping for his own. That was his way of consoling his dad.

He believed fully that his dad was the wisest, the cleverest, and the best of men; and however unworthy he might feel himself, what comfort, what happiness it was to this poor overworked carpenter to have one creature on earth who reposed this touchingly unquestioning trust in him! What "my dad" said, that was law; and what "my dad" did was always admirable; and though dad was conscious of many a failing, he would not for the life of him have the Little Chap suspect them. He strove manfully to live up to the Little Chap's idea of him. People said he spoiled the boy; and the mother, particularly, who was a trifle jealous of their intimacy, declared that it was time the Little Chap was sent to school and learned something besides whittling and cutting his fingers. This seemed so perfectly rational that, out of consideration for the Little Chap, Amund was at last persuaded to send him to school. It was of no use that the boy wept, and declared that he wanted to be with his dad. How was his dad to get on without his help? What would become of dad if he did not look out for him? This idea that he was helping dad had become so rooted in his mind that he harped upon it early and late, and grieved himself thin and pale for fear that his dad might come to harm without him.

Somehow, life was no more the same to Amund, after his loss of the Little Chap's companionship. There was no joy any more in his work; and it seemed too that his luck had deserted him. Once he ran a file, the handle of which broke, into his hand, and another time

he nearly split his kneepan with an adze. Then he was laid up for three weeks. Provisions ran very low in the house. Kari, his wife, began to talk about applying for help to the guardians of the poor. It was then the plan matured in Amund's mind to cross the ocean and begin life over again in the New World, where a man of his skill certainly could accomplish something more than to keep out of the poorhouse.

Accordingly, though it nearly broke his heart to part from the Little Chap, he crossed the Atlantic, promising to send for the family as soon as he had founded a home for them in the great West. He begged hard to be allowed to take the Little Chap with him, but Kari would not listen to that, because to her the Little Chap was a kind of a pawn, a guarantee that her husband meant to keep his word, and send for her and the undesirable girls as soon as his circumstances warranted. Her conscience was not quite easy in regard to her treatment of him, and she could afford to take no chances.

Amund arrived in Chicago at a time when skilled carpenters were scarce and wages high. There was a great deal of building going on, and he had no difficulty in obtaining work. He was a master in his trade, thoroughly honorable, frugal, and industrious. It is not to be denied, however, that life is a dreary affair to one who toils and toils from morning till night, and whose starved heart cries out every hour and minute of the day for one who is far away. Where is the Little Chap now? What is the Little Chap doing now? How does he look? Does he care so much for his dad as he did; and is he as eager as ever to help his dad? These were Amund's constant reflections whenever a little respite from labor afforded him a chance to think. Sitting with his dinner-pail, leaning against his workbench, he would shut his eyes and fancy he saw the Little Chap standing before him, with his grimy little fists in his patched trousers, and his tousled yellow head a little on one side as he looked up into his dad's face and said, "How would you ever get on without me,

dad?" Or he would lose himself in the thought of the oft-repeated scene at the dinner-table, when the little chap stood up for his dad so manfully, and the little hand, with its sweetly comforting touch, stole into his under the table. And then the tears would gather in his eyes and roll slowly down his cheeks, leaving a grimy track like that of a rain-drop on a dusty window-pane.

"My Little Chap, my dear Little Chap," he would murmur, as he arose and returned to his toil, "when shall I ever see you again?"

It was this burning heart-hunger for his boy which made him turn every penny many times before he could persuade himself to spend it. He grew positively stingy, denying himself the necessary food and clothes, always trying to do with a little less, in the hope of hastening the day when he should be able to send for the Little Chap. He worked surreptitiously after time in order to earn some extra pennies, and he got the reputation among his fellow-workmen of being a mean, penurious skinflint, who hoarded his wages with a view to becoming a boss some day and lording it over them. He was accordingly excessively unpopular, and only succeeded in escaping injury by keeping scrupulously out of every one's way, and ignoring insults which made his blood boil.

At the end of one year Amund had saved $550 from his wages, but having no confidence in the banks, he carried the entire amount in gold eagles in a leather belt about his waist. The consciousness of carrying so much money made him, however, very uneasy, and disturbed his sleep. Four or five times every night he started up in terror, having dreamed that his money was stolen. It then occurred to him that the only safe way to dispose of it would be to invest it in a cottage and lot on the west side, where land was yet cheap. Land could not run away, and a house not even the most daring thief could steal. Distrusting every one in this bewilderingly strange land, he was in no haste to solicit advice. But one day an advertisement in a

Scandinavian paper caught his eye and set him thinking. It read as follows:

"THE POOR MAN'S FRIEND.

"The Fenston Real-estate Investment Company sell choice City Lots, improved and unimproved, on the Instalment Plan. West Side Property a Specialty."

Amund cut this out, read it at least twenty times a day and carried it in his pocket for weeks before he summoned courage to call at the address designated. But his hoard kept increasing week by week, and his anxiety grew apace. Why should he not call upon the Fenston Real-estate Investment Company? It was the poor man's friend, the advertisement said, and might offer him some good advice as to the best way of acquiring a home in the shortest possible time; for he was growing eagerer every day for the sight of the Little Chap.

Finally, one day in the early spring, he called upon the Fenston Real-estate Investment Company. He had fancied from the advertisement something very complicated and magnificent, and was somewhat disappointed at being confronted with a sandy-haired and very pimpled young man, who sat in his shirt sleeves in a scantily furnished back office, chewing a toothpick.

"Is this—the—the—office of the Fenston Real-estate Investment Company?" queried Amund, respectfully.

"Yes," the young man replied, taking his feet down from the table. "What can I do for you?"

"I—I—should like to see the—the—persident of the company, if—if—you would be so very kind as to call him," Amund remarked, apologetically.

"I regret to say the president is out of town at present," said the plausible youth; "but won't you sit down, please? I think, perhaps, I can give you all the information you require; and I need not say I shall be very happy if I can be of service to you."

There was something so insinuating in the young fellow's manner that Amund, though he had resolved to be very cautious, soon found himself talking freely.

The next day the young man—Farley was his name—dropped in upon him, by pure chance, it seemed, while he was having his noon rest; and they became better acquainted. The following Sunday they met again; and Farley took Amund about in a buggy, and showed him all the property he had for sale on the west side. He invited him to lunch with him in his little cottage on West Indiana Street, where he was living; and the upshot of many interviews and conversations was that he offered to sell this cottage, with lot, to Amund for $2000, possession to be granted when $1200 had been paid, and a mortgage to be given for the remaining amount. It seemed all so perfectly fair and square that Amund, after having got the price down to $1800 and the furniture thrown in, had no hesitation in closing the bargain. He paid over to Farley the $800 which he had then accumulated, and received an acknowledgment of the amount from him, with promise of deed on payment of $400 more.

Then he picked out the room which was to belong to the Little Chap (the girls might take what was left); and all day long, during his work, he hummed to himself or broke into snatches of unmelodious song at the thought of the Little Chap's pleasure in that room, and the furniture which he would make with his own hands for the Little Chap's comfort. He worked with a will now, and would scarcely grant himself time for sleep; for every blow with his hammer and every whiz of his saw brought the Little Chap nearer.

Then another year passed. Month by month Amund handed over his savings to Farley, who pocketed them in a cool, business-like manner; and at last, when the $1200 had been paid, he kept his word, and gave a deed of the property to the carpenter. Joyously then Amund wrote to his wife, telling her to make no delay in coming, for he had now a home of his own in which to receive her and the children. And it was all furnished, and there was a separate room for the Little Chap—God bless him!—where he could keep all his funny little traps, so that his sisters wouldn't annoy him.

Much he wrote in this strain, for his heart was overbrimming with joy, and life seemed brighter and more beautiful to him than ever before. The only thing that troubled him a little was the fact that the family who lived in the house had not yet moved out. But Farley explained that their lease did not expire until April 1st, and that in the mean while he would have to be patient. On April 2d they would be gone, and then he could take possession.

I shall not attempt to describe the meeting between the Little Chap and his dad. It was just the 2d of April when the family arrived in Chicago, and were put, like so much baggage, into an express wagon and driven to West Indiana Street. Amund ran up the front steps with the Little Chap in his arms to show off his cottage; and the wife and the five girls, all bundled up with scarfs and kerchiefs until they looked like walking haystacks, scrambled out of the wagon as best they could. Farley had promised to be there with the keys, and formally put the new owner in possession. It annoyed Amund a good deal when his first and second ring at the door-bell remained unanswered, and still more annoyed was he when at the third a man who had not the least resemblance to Farley opened the door and asked him, in language more vigorous than polite, what he wanted.

"I—I have bought this house," Amund said, with an air of righteous indignation, "and I was told by Mr. Farley that you were to move out on the 1st of April."

The occupant of the house smiled an extremely unpleasant smile, and asked, coldly, "Whom did you buy it of?"

"Mr. Farley."

"That is a great pity, for he never owned it."

"But where is he? He promised me the keys last night."

"He has gone West."

"Gone West?" An icy terror clutched at the Norseman's heart, and he reeled backward as if he had been

struck. "Good God!" he groaned, sinking down upon the topmost step. "Good God!"

The Little Chap, seeing his distress, wound his arms tightly about his neck and rubbed his cheek against his face. He sat thus for five or ten minutes, while the five blond bundled-up girls stood on the sidewalk staring at him with innocent stupidity. Then the man of the house reappeared, and ordered them in harsh language to move on. And when they only continued to stare in uncomprehending wonder, two policemen were sent for, and the whole family were huddled into a patrol wagon and driven to the nearest police station. There Amund, under the stress of answering the required questions, was aroused sufficiently from his dumb misery to send for a Norwegian lawyer, who presently made his appearance. He listened to the carpenter's story, and then shook his head mournfully.

"You have been swindled, my friend," he said. "You ought to have been more cautious."

"But—but, lawyer," the poor fellow went on, gazing into his face with an anguished expectancy, "he—he—sold me—the house—and here I've got the papers. It's all right, surely. Ain't it, lawyer?"

The lawyer looked at the paper which was handed him, and then dropped it contemptuously on the floor.

"A very clumsy forgery," he said.

"But—but—he couldn't surely sell me—what—what didn't belong to him, lawyer?"

"Yes, he could, if any one was fool enough to buy."

"But, lawyer—I say, lawyer—do you mean to say now, that—that I have worked and slaved nigh on to three years, and often starved and skimped myself, for the Little Chap's sake—do you mean to say that—that man is to have it, and not my Little Chap?"

Beads of cold perspiration burst out upon his brow, and the pained wonder and stunned bewilderment in his face were pitiful to behold. His slow wits could not yet grasp the situation, and he was obviously hoping against hope that there was some terrible misun-

derstanding at the bottom of it all, and that sooner or later it would be cleared up.

The lawyer had in all his practice never encountered so heart-rending a case. He weighed his words well before he answered, "My dear friend, you have paid dearly for your first experience in the New World."

Amund, taking in slowly the bearings of this remark, stood staring before him with a vacant look of dawning terror; then tremblingly he raised his hands toward the ceiling, and cried, with a frightful energy, "But, God, what are you doing up there in heaven when such things can happen upon the earth?"

There was a hush as of death in the station-room. In the presence of so monstrous a wrong every one stood helpless, and a little awed. After the terrible explosion of despair Amund's head dropped upon his breast, his knees tottered, and he fell in a heap upon the floor.

The Little Chap, who had stood with his hands in his pockets, a puzzled frown upon his face, during this strange scene, grew suddenly alarmed as his father fell. He strove bravely to disguise his distress, which he held to be unmanly, but his lips quivered, and his eyes were full of tears.

"Dad," he said, stooping over the prostrate form of his father with a touching air of loving protectorship—"Dad, I wouldn't take on so if I were you." He waited anxiously for a response, and when none came, he continued, in a soothingly comforting tone: "Dad, dear dad, don't you worry. I'll help you, dad."

The sweet old well-remembered phrase penetrated through the stricken man's numb lethargy of despair. He raised himself suddenly on his knees, stared with a wakening wonder at the child; then, closing him in his arms, he burst into tears.

"Yes, my Little Chap," he cried, "you *will* help me. And may God forgive me for despairing, as long as I have you!"

And he arose with the Little Chap in his arms, and the two began bravely the battle of life anew.

She did not mean to halt,—and still less had any intention of staying halted; but, as Florence Hull clearly shows, in the following story, which was written for ROMANCE, the coolest and most positive person cannot always have intentions beforehand—much less carry them out.

A HALT AT DAWN.

MARGARET DANVERS stepped aboard the southern bound sleeper at Chicago one stormy March evening, and as she walked composedly to her berth in the middle of the car, the eyes of every person present were riveted upon her. She wore a closely fitting garment of Russian sable, which enveloped her completely, and a large beaver hat with drooping plumes, and from the single fine diamond flashing at her throat to the tips of her dainty Suéde boots she looked the model of a fashionable beauty. She was the only woman on the car, and before she had fairly settled herself comfortably, all the men had mentally pronounced their opinion of her looks and style, and hazarded a conjecture as to her age. Her attendant, a florid man of middle age, received the slight degree of attention justified by his seeming only an adjunct of the moment. As he left her, he put into her hands a bunch of costly roses, which she received with a smile and laid upon the opposite seat the instant he was gone.

Of the score of passengers, two or three knew her by sight, for she was, in a way, a public character, but as it happened, none were really acquainted with her, and before long even those most deeply interested in her appearance yielded to the apathy peculiar to sleeping-cars, and subsided into their newspapers or their rugs, preparing to wear out the evening until bed-time.

Margaret amused herself in watching the flying snow and in reverie. Too used to travelling to even care to look about her, she yielded to the prevailing somnambulistic influence just enough to dream without sleep-

ing. At first there was in her mind a confusion of events past, present, and to come. Incidents of no importance mingled with greater ones, and her reflections became mixed with little fanciful suggestions of things long since forgotten, or, rather, voluntarily put out of mind. She tried to think of her career, to recall her triumphs, and to dwell upon the possibilities of the future. She told herself that music was her life, that all she had to do with was the beautiful and the divine in art, and that the everyday existence she had struggled to rise above was henceforth nothing more than an unpleasant memory.

At twenty-eight she was her own mistress, earning an independent income through the use of her beautiful voice. The teaching days and the drudgery of the class-room had passed, and as a concert-singer she was favorably known in more than one western city noted for its critical taste. After a successful winter in Milwaukee and Chicago, she was now upon her way to fulfil an engagement in Baltimore, which promised more than anything in which she had yet engaged. She was in the heyday of her powers, admired, in radiant health, conscious of her beauty and talent, and entirely satisfied with life. What did it mean that, as she looked from the window with a proud smile upon her lips, some tantalizing thoughts should intrude themselves, and the mind so entirely self-poised should feel, for the first time in years, the weakening influence of some emotional fancies. It was her boast that she was never lonely, never sad, that her whole heart was in her work.

The conductor passed through taking tickets, and brought her back to the present. And after this came the little stir of the porter making up the berths, and she moved to the end of the car. In front, two men were talking.

"Never saw a promise of a worse storm," said one. "Shouldn't wonder if the tracks were blocked a little ahead."

"Comes from the south-west," suggested the other. "If necessary, they'll put on another locomotive. We're

bound to get through any rate on this train: that's one comfort."

By nine o'clock Margaret, enveloped in a downy wrapper of dark red, lay courting sleep in her section. Over her was spread the fur ulster, none too warm above the blankets, even for her warm blood. The thermometer outside would have registered zero, and whiffs of icy air found their way every now and then into the car. Everything was quiet save her thoughts, which began to utter themselves with loud, importunate voices, as if answering some call without, independent of her control. "I have happily been able to say all my life that I didn't know what nerves were," said Margaret to herself, "but I begin to think that from some inexplicable cause I am nervous."

"Richard Allen!" She started as if the words had been spoken in her ear. Swiftly memory flew back ten years, and she saw herself standing bare-headed at the gate of her father's house in the Highlands of the Hudson, where her childhood had been passed; and beside her, bending tenderly to catch her lightest word, the form of her first lover, then a poor, obscure young lieutenant in the army. With an indifference scarce tinged with pity, since it hardly occurred to her in those days that men could really feel, she had met his pleading affection with an enthusiastic outburst of her ambition to lead the artist's life, to spend her energies in self-development, and show what a woman wholly devoted to an intellectual and artistic career might become. They had sung in the choir together, had mingled their voices in moments when, inspired by devotional ecstasy, it seemed that the two spirits united into one, in that mysterious fellowship which belongs alike to religion and to love. And yet she had no feeling for him above regard: no feeling for any one, for anything but art.

"You must not think I am deficient in womanly sensibility," she had said to him, with one of those soft glances of the meaning and effect of which she was entirely careless and unconscious. "But some women

must remain spinsters, you know, and I think I am meant to be one of the sisterhood."

"You do not know yourself. The day will come when ambition will seem nothing to you; when the homely things, the real things, will take on their true value to your eyes, and a 'career' will seem a mere artificiality that has nothing to do with what is best and sweetest in life."

The words had passed her by as an idle phrase, evoked from disappointment. And she and Richard Allen had parted, he going to his post on the line in Arizona, and she to Italy to study. And yet nothing passes from us entirely. Here, without warning, without her intention, the little scene came up before her eyes; and she saw again the apple-orchard in blossom, the red brick chimney of the school-house across the way looming up in the moonlight, the hills in the distance, the strong, proudly-carried figure at her side. And then scene after scene came up before her, always with the two figures present: the manly, devoted lover, the self-absorbed girl.

Yet she had lived for ambition, and the world had been kind to her, after she had proven her mettle. She had not lacked lovers, but she had never loved. Her strong will, which had determinedly mapped out an existence entirely free from sentiment, had carried her through every affair triumphantly and untouched. Four or five hours ago she had entered that car as "free from the trammels of passion" as a vestal virgin. What was in the air, what was in the night, that hurried her on into imaginative flights? Constantly, like two stars, two meaning eyes seemed to gleam upon her, and kindle a world of emotion latent and unsuspected in her nature! She tried to be cynical, to laugh, to think of something else; she tried her best to get to sleep, but only her will could sleep, and fancy still rioted. Richard Allen had had the making of a fine man in him: what had become of him,—why had nothing been heard of him? The woman whose religion was success had little patience with patience; it seemed to her that

all virtue was embodied in some sort of action. A man who at forty—he must be forty—was still obscure, was not worth a thought. And yet he had possessed a certain sort of strength. She had been forced to admire, in old times, a suggested moral superiority, a higher point of view than she considered practical. If he had brought himself to live up to his own standard, he must have been unable to make necessary concessions. And then, as Margaret recalled some "concessions" she had herself made to success, she felt her cheeks burn in the darkness. How often she had traded upon her own attractions, how often made use of the influence of her personality to bring about certain ends! If she had not lied in words, she had in act. Her present status had not been attained without some sacrifice of scruples.

The woman turned restlessly in her berth, wondering why such ideas should come to her now to interfere with her peace. She was good; she was ashamed of nothing in her past; she was living a high, free, independent life, the life for a woman of intellect and energy to lead. Thank heaven, she was not an emotional creature! Sentiment had been trained out of her. Long after midnight she lost consciousness, and passed a few hours in fitful slumber. It was cruel that she should have to dream of Richard Allen; dream that they were together in an open boat, drifting out to sea, and that his arms were around her, his eyes looking into hers. And she cared for nothing, thought of nothing but that he held her close—how strangely sweet it was!—

A jar, a shock, a sudden stop, as if the train had run against a wall of rock, and Margaret started up and drew the curtain aside instinctively. A fall through space—what was it, oh, where was she! Had the train fallen down an embankment?

After a minute she realized that she had been thrown from her berth across the car, that other persons lay about, some groaning, some hastily picking themselves up. She shut her eyes: there was a sharp pain in her left arm, and a weight upon her side. A falling lamp

had struck her, and from some cause she could not rise; her leg must be broken. There was a terrible confusion, much talking, and half-a-dozen people bending over her pityingly and asking her questions.

"What has happened? Is anybody killed?" she asked.

Several persons answered at once. They had run into a freight. The engineer on their own train was killed; no one else. Many were hurt. Could she bear to be moved?

"I must," she returned, setting her lips, for agonizing pains began to shoot through her foot, and the thought of being touched was suffering.

"Fortunately we are just on the outskirts of Frithville —there are houses near." It was the conductor who spoke now, and he at once took charge. She was lifted carefully, wrapped in blankets and carried out. Their car had sustained less damage than any other, being in the rear, and there was no difficulty in getting out.

"If she could stand it to be taken over yonder," said some one, pointing to a house some distance away, "she'd be more comfortable, I reckon."

"Where are we?" asked Margaret, bravely suppressing her pain.

"Somewhere in southern Indiana—a little town called Frithville," a man answered her.

"If she could stand it to be taken over to the doctor's house"——said the persistent first speaker.

"I can stand it," she interposed; "take me there quickly."

They improvised a sort of rough litter of mattresses, and carried her across a field in the open country. The dawn was just breaking, and the pale moon was slowly fading out of view before the great coming light. The air was clear, cold, crisp; and though there had evidently been a heavy storm during the night, it had cleared completely, and the first ray of sunlight glittered upon banks of frozen snow. The house before which they stopped was a plain, two-storied wooden structure, which seemed at first sight peculiarly barren-looking. Clean white curtains hung in straight, scant folds at

the windows. The door had been drab in color, but the paint had been so assiduously scrubbed that one now took its presence on trust. There was a brass knocker and a rush door-mat, on which lay a large black cat with bristling white whiskers.

The door was opened by a severe Swedish girl, whose starched cap and apron suggested careful housekeeping, as her suspicious countenance suggested inhospitality. She made no objections to admitting them, however, and Margaret was carefully deposited upon a couch in the sitting-room to wait the coming of the doctor, who, the maid said, had just left the house to go to the scene of the wreck.

"We'll send him back to you, ma'am, right off," one of the men assured her. "You ought to be 'tended to first."

"Not if others are suffering and need him more," said Margaret faintly.

The ungenial-looking Swede proved herself to be not deficient in skill, even though sympathy was in a measure lacking. She made her guest as comfortable as she could. The shoe was cut from the swollen ankle, which was bathed and bandaged, and the hurts upon the shoulder and side were pronounced to be only bruises which "Herr doctor would make right." And then Margaret was left to herself while the girl went to make the inevitable "cup of tea," which was to set everything straight.

At first she lay perfectly still, seeing nothing, and caring for nothing, her mind full of vexation and impatience over an accident which must delay the fulfilment of her engagement. It did not occur to her that it might have been worse; anything was bad enough.

After awhile her eyes began to wander idly around the room. It seemed half parlor, half study. Folding doors divided it from the office at the back. There was a book-case, well filled; some good engravings on the walls; a few easy-chairs covered with raw silk of a dull hue, much worn; and a writing-table between the windows, half covered with books and magazines. There

was something agreeable to her taste in the air of the room. She could imagine it the abode of a man whose very poverty could never become squalid. The great open Franklin stove shone brightly, and the hearth was scrupulously clean. Upon the mantel were a bronze clock and a pair of fine vases, dainty in tone and finish; they were the sole womanly touches about the place. Noting these details half indifferently, she lay back again and closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, they happened to glance directly over to a corner of the room which had before been dim, but was now illuminated by a shaft of sunlight. A carved bracket hung there, and on the shelf lay a singular-looking little instrument, shaped like a dagger, of Moorish device, the handle inlaid with gold, left rough and unpolished. When Margaret saw this small object, she gave a little cry and tried to rise, but finding that impossible, she dropped back upon her pillows as if she had been shot, her eyes fixed upon the little instrument with a look of recognition that was half pleasure, half alarm. What strange trick was fate about to play her? How could this thing be possible?

There was a noise: the front door opened, and some one came along the hall with a firm, measured step. Margaret's heart, that well-regulated organ, beat to suffocation. She hardly dared listen or look. She threw her arm up over her forehead, nearly concealing her face. Some one entered the room and paused beside her. A well-remembered voice, graver, deeper than of yore, yet with a cheery ring in it, said, "Let me see what I can do to help you, madam." A chair was drawn up to the side of the couch, a gentle hand took her own. Her pulse was beating furiously; the hand was held rather long, as if something perplexed him. She felt searching eyes bent upon her face, and suddenly threw down her arm. The doctor drew back, his face paling, and the two looked at each other for a minute in silence. She spoke first, putting out her hand timidly.

"Richard, don't you remember me?"

"Remember you? As if I were likely ever to forget you."

She softly touched his empty left sleeve, pinned over his breast, two tears standing in her eyes.

"At Black Gulch," he said. "I have got over minding it. Don't grieve."

"You left the army?"

"Yes, four years ago. My health gave way. I studied medicine in Indianapolis, was invited here by an old friend to become his assistant, and shortly afterward he died. That is all."

"You never—never——"

"Yes; I married."

The words were an unexpected stab. Margaret gasped, amazed that she should care. Her face suddenly became suffused with color, and she turned it away.

"She only lived a year—Margaret," said the doctor, bending down to study the fair, flushed face, suddenly pain-smitten.

"My arm!" said Margaret faintly, drawing his attention to the lesser hurt.

He was the doctor again at once, and, for the next half-hour all professional gravity, and as impersonal as the sphinx; yet the woman felt through every nerve, like a musical vibration, the thrill of his firm, warm fingers, the scrutiny of his eyes. He was changed, worn through suffering rather than years, his face lined, his hair grown gray; with nothing young about him but his eyes, which sparkled with a cheer and brightness no grief could dim, for they mirrored a mind above all personal considerations, concerned with those large, loving interests belonging to humanity.

The woman felt the presence of this spirit, as if something beautiful and good had settled softly down beside her, and mutely besought her attention from herself and her narrow world. She struggled against it, yet it was like a shaft of genial sun heat, entering suddenly some frozen glen; she felt, in a heart purposely hardened against such influences, a stir, a thaw; ice was

breaking, and the long-stilled waters of human affection began to flow in gentle currents, inspiring a sensation of delight that astonished and abashed her.

The doctor came and went quietly, her eyes following him. When he intercepted the look, she blushed like a school-girl. Too busy all that day to give her more than necessary attention, he yet lost nothing that passed, and she had a sense which was oddly pleasant that he understood something of what was passing in her mind. It was terrible, too. There were moments when she wished herself miles away. Besides all the physical pain which she endured that long day, Margaret's soul was the battle-ground of a struggle far more exhausting. Ambition, pride, and love of the world fought hard against a tender, newly-born impulse, which it seemed that a single breath of reason ought to chill to death.

The coals burned red in the open stove; a little tea-table was set in the middle of the room, and in the easiest chair in the house, piled with all the available cushions, the doctor placed Margaret, taking his position opposite her. The solemn Swedish girl brought in supper, which was well cooked and served with a scrupulous cleanliness that almost atoned for the absence of a more dainty service.

The doctor's face shone with satisfaction, but his manner, although genial, was ceremonious. Margaret felt that, in the few feet intervening between them, there lay years of care and grief and disappointment. She felt a yearning to bridge the chasm, to draw nearer to him, even though she herself had to take the hard steps toward understanding.

Thought the woman: "Does he love me still?" And thought the man: "Is she tired of the world, and could she learn to love me now?"

But they spoke of music; of camp-life on the western frontier; of what they had seen, what they had read. Not a word of what they felt. A few hours later the doctor stood in his bare little soldier's bed-room, and looked in his glass. For five minutes he studied him-

self, and then he turned away, resolved to let no new hope spring up in his heart. But Margaret slept to dream of him, woke through the night thinking of him, as she could not have thought in the old days, when he wooed her in the confidence of his fresh, hopeful youth.

There was no hotel in the village, and the few scattered houses were crowded with the wounded passengers, lying over till well enough to proceed with their journey. Margaret was not sorry that there was no other place for her than the refuge she had been taken to. "I am thinking that I am singularly fortunate in being in the doctor's house, where I get special attention," she said to him, with a little fluttering smile.

In time these shy looks wrought upon the doctor, and his stern resolution wavered. He found himself sounding her preferences and attachments, with the unconfessed design of extracting some unguarded word that might indicate a change in her old convictions. Carrying on together these two processes—determination to refrain and resolution to pursue, which often accompanies some course of action embraced in accordance with a natural, unworldly judgment, he managed to betray to the eager girl all he wished to conceal and she wished to know. She had telegraphed to Baltimore that she would be there in ten days. Four of them had passed, and she was free from pain and able to put her foot to the ground. The doctor persisted in helping her from her couch to the chair and back again.

"But I can walk alone now," she objected.

"We must be careful. Not until to-morrow." She protested with greater earnestness. "True—I have but one arm," he said, with the first accent of bitterness she had heard from him. Her lips parted to give utterance to a sudden rush of words, but she only looked at him, with eyes so eloquent that he answered the look.

"Margaret, do you care? Dear, I have always loved you, I love you now,—can you care?"

She drooped her head on his shoulder, but said nothing. The doctor held her close for a minute, and then, leaving her, began to walk up and down the room.

"It is impossible!"

"It may be impossible," murmured Margaret with a little blush, "but—it is true."

"It is cruel in me to ask it, dear. You are young, beautiful, brilliant—with success at your feet, and I——"

She put up her hand imploringly. It was caught and held. "And I am poor, obscure and—old," he finished, his eyes upon her face.

"I have come to you, Richard. It seems strange to me. I cannot explain it, but it seems as if everything the world has to offer me is nothing beside——"

"Beside my love?" he bent on one knee beside her chair and put her hand to his lips.

"I want to share your life," she said, and a new expression grew upon her face, a high, devoted look which was half heroic, all womanly. "I want to learn something of the great things, the true things."

"You have had greater things than I can give you. Think of all you are leaving!"

She made a gesture of renunciation. "It does not seem much to leave—for you."

"Ah, my darling, I am afraid you will regret it. The work-a-day world will be a trial to you. And mine is a veritable work-a-day world."

He kept his eyes on her face, half dreading to see her shrink away. But what woman is not won by an appearance of self-renunciation? Richard could not have let her go now; at the last instant he would have snatched her to his breast, had she drawn away. But the misgiving that rushed over him so fiercely was a real one, a sensible one; he felt it profoundly, and tried to read in her eyes a shadow of this coming regret. But her eyes were clear, loving, radiant. She pressed herself against his breast, and gave him the great gift of her life and her future. Would the shadow ever come?

The moon looked softly in, an hour later, and finding the lovers in that delicious dream which once in a lifetime comes to most men and women, drew over her face a gray cloud-veil and left them to dream on.

M. Alphonse Daudet, whose brilliant imagination conceived the following dainty and amusing extravanganza, should know that, whatever was once true of Chicago, it is no longer built of wood. "Wood's Town" has been translated for ROMANCE by L. L. Otis.

WOOD'S TOWN.

A FANTASY.

It was a superb site on which to build a town. All that was necessary to be done was simply to clear the river-bank by cutting down part of the forest,—that immense virgin forest, rooted there since the beginning of the world. Then, sheltered all around by wooded hills, the town would descend to a magnificent harbor at the mouth of the Red River, only four miles from the sea. As soon as the authorities at Washington had given permission, wood-cutters and carpenters were put to work; but you never saw such a forest. Its roots and vines clung to the soil with such tenacity that as one end was cut, the other, reviving from its wounds, repulsed the intruder; and each blow of the hatchet brought forth green buds.

The streets and squares of the town, scarcely yet defined, were overrun by vegetation. The walls grew less quickly than the trees, and were no sooner raised than they gave way under the constant efforts of the roots.

In order to overcome this resistance, which rendered axes and hatchets useless, they were forced to employ fire. Day and night a suffocating smoke filled the depths of the thickets, while the great trees overhead flamed like altar-candles. The forest still tried to continue the warfare, resisting the fire with a constant flow of sap, and the chill of its heavy foliage. At last the winter came. The snow fell like a second death on the vast tract full of blackened tree-trunks and charred roots. Now they could build.

Very soon an immense town, all of wood like Chicago,

extended to the brink of the Red River. Its streets were wide, straight, and numbered, radiating from open squares; it had a Stock Exchange, markets, churches, schools and a complete maritime equipment of docks, custom-houses, store-houses, sheds and ship-building yards. This town of wood—Wood's Town, as it was called—was quickly peopled by adventurous spirits. A feverish activity spread in every direction; but on the surrounding hills, overlooking the crowded streets and the harbor full of vessels, loomed up in a half-circle a sombre and menacing mass. It was the watchful forest.

She gazed at this insolent town, which had robbed her of her place on the river-bank and of three thousand trees. All Wood's Town had been created out of her very being. The high masts which swayed down in the harbor, the innumerable roofs, sloping one toward another, the most distant cabin on the outskirts,—she had supplied them all. Ah, what a terrible rancor she cherished against this town of usurpers!

While the winter lasted, nothing was noticeable. The inhabitants of Wood's Town sometimes heard an indistinct cracking sound in their roofs or furniture. From time to time a wall would split, or a shop-counter burst asunder with a loud report. But new wood is subject to such accidents, and no one attached any importance to them. However, at the approach of Spring—a sudden, impetuous spring, so rich in sap that one could feel it stirring in the ground, like the faint gathering of water-founts—the earth began to show signs of agitation, upheaved by some invisible but active force. In each house the furniture and plastered walls swelled, and there appeared on the floors long blisters, as if raised by the passing of a mole. Neither windows nor doors—in fact, nothing—worked properly. "It is the dampness," the people said; "when the heat comes, it will pass."

All at once, the day after a great storm which had come from the sea, bringing summer in its fervent lightning and warm rain, the waking town gave a cry of astonishment. The red roofs of the public buildings,

the church spires, the floors of the houses, even the wood of the beds, were all sprinkled with a green tint, light as mildew, delicate as lace. On examining this closely, it proved to be a quantity of microscopic buds, which had already begun to unfold their leaves. This freak of the rain amused without alarming; but before evening great bunches of foliage burst out everywhere on the furniture and walls. The branches grew while one watched them; lightly held in the hand, one felt them growing, and struggling like wings to be free. The next day all the houses resembled conservatories. Vines trailed along the balustrades of the stairways. In the narrow streets, branches from the roofs on either side met and mingled, casting over the clamorous town the shade of forest avenues. It became alarming. Suddenly some one cried, "Look at the forest!" and they saw with terror that within two days the green half-circle had approached much nearer. The forest seemed to be descending upon the town. Already an advance-guard of brambles and vines had reached the first houses of the suburbs.

Then Wood's Town began to understand and feel afraid. Evidently the forest was coming to reclaim her place on the river-bank; and her trees, cut down, dispersed and transformed, were releasing themselves to go and meet her. How should they resist the invasion? With fire one risked the destruction of the whole town. And what could hatchets do against this ever-renewing sap, these monstrous roots attacking the soil from beneath, these thousands of seeds which filled the air, causing a tree to grow wherever they fell! Yet everybody went bravely to work with scythes, harrows and hatchets; and they demolished great quantities of foliage. All in vain. Hour by hour, the confusion of primeval forests, where vines entangle gigantic growths, invaded the streets of Wood's Town. Already insects and reptiles had made their appearance. In all the corners were nests, the flutter of wings, and crowds of little chattering beaks. In one night the granaries of the town were exhausted by the hatching broods.

Then, like an irony in the midst of this disaster, came butterflies of all sizes and colors, circling over the blossoming grapes; and the provident bees, seeking a sure shelter in the hollows of these quickly grown trees, installed their honeycomb as a sign of continuance.

Vaguely among the rustling, leafy billows one heard the heavy blows of hatchets and axes; but on the fourth day all work was acknowledged useless. The grass was too thick and high. Climbing vines attached themselves to the wood-cutters' arms, stopping their movements. Besides, the houses had become uninhabitable; the furniture, covered with leaves, had lost all form. The ceilings had fallen in, pierced by the sharp Yucca and long thorn of the Mahogany tree, and over the roofless houses spread the Catalpas, like an immense dome. Only flight remained.

Through the network of plants and branches, which grew more and more impenetrable, the frightened people of Wood's Town hastened toward the river, carrying all the money and valuables they could. But how difficult to reach the river-brink! There were no more docks there;—nothing but some gigantic reeds. In place of lumber-yards were pine forests; and the new vessels lying in the harbor, covered with leaves, seemed like little green islands. Fortunately, a few iron-clads chanced to be there, on which the crowd took refuge, and from their decks saw the old forest triumphantly unite with the new.

Little by little, the tree-tops blended, until under the blue, sunlit sky the enormous mass of foliage stretched from river-brink to distant horizon. No more trace of town, nor roofs, nor walls. From time to time could be heard the dull reverberation of a fall, last echo of the crumbling ruins, or the strokes of an enraged wood-cutter resounded through the leafy depths. Then nothing but the rustling, humming, vibrating silence; some clouds of white butterflies floating over the deserted river; and far away toward the open sea, a fleeing ship, with three tall green trees among her sails, carrying the last emigrants from what had been Wood's Town.

Alexander Kielland, in this fragmentary specimen of the somewhat extraordinary work which he has done in Scandinavian literature, voices the horrible discontent which seems to animate vast bodies of the foreign poor. This awful passion of class-hatred is little understood among native Americans. The responsibilities and the trials of wealth stand, perhaps, in too close view of the "toiling millions" among us; or perhaps the life of the so-called "lower orders" holds more of privilege and of pleasure here than in other countries. Certain it is that, except among those who have recently immigrated, little of caste-bitterness exists in America. This sketch is translated for ROMANCE by John Koren.

A BALL-ROOM MOOD.

SHE had ascended the smooth marble steps without mishaps, without exertion, borne up by her good nature and the consciousness of great beauty. She had assumed a high position in the *salons* of the rich and mighty, and yet she had not paid for it with her honor and fair fame. Still, no one could tell where she came from, though people whispered that it was from the very lowest stratum of society.

As a foundling in an outskirt of Paris, she had starved through her childhood in a life hovering between poverty and crime, of which only those can form an idea who know it by experience. The rest of us, taking our knowledge from hearsay and from books, must draw on the imagination to get a conception of the inherited misery in a great city. And yet the terrible pictures which we thus paint pale, may be, when held up against the reality.

It was, in fact, but a question of time when crime would clutch her,—as a cog-wheel clutches one who comes too close to the machinery,—and having whirled her about in a short life of disgrace and degradation, would, with the precision of a machine, put her down in some nook where, unknown and unknowable, she might end this ghastly caricature of a human life.

But, as will sometimes happen, she was "discovered" by a rich and distinguished man. It was while she, then a child of fourteen, ran across one of the broad streets. She was on her way to a dark back room in the Rue de Quatre de Vents, where she worked for a woman whose specialty was ball flowers.

It was not only her extraordinary beauty which captivated the rich man, but her movements, her manners and the expression of those half-formed features—all seemed to him to point to a strife between an originally good character and budding impudence. As he was possessed of the capricious moods of abundant riches, he determined to make an attempt at rescuing the poor child.

To come into possession of her was an easy matter, for she did not belong to any one. She was given a name and placed in one of the best convent-schools. Her benefactor had had the pleasure of observing that the evil germs which he had detected died and disappeared. She developed a lovely, somewhat indolent character, faultless, calm manners and a rare beauty.

When she was grown up, he married her. They led a very good and peaceful married life. He had unbounded confidence in her, notwithstanding the great difference in their ages, and she deserved it.

Married people do not live in such close relations in France as with us; hence they are not so exacting, and their disappointments are fewer.

She was not happy, but she was contented. Her character was of the grateful kind. Wealth did not weary her; on the contrary, it often pleased her in an almost childlike manner. But no one guessed it, for her manner was always self-possessed and dignified. Only this was suspected—that there was something wrong about her origin. As no one answered the questions which had been vaguely raised about it, they finally ceased. There is so much else to think about in Paris!

She had forgotten her past. She had forgotten it in the same manner in which we cease to remember the

roses, the silk ribbons and the faded letters of our youth —because we never think of them. They lie locked up in a drawer which we never open. And yet—should it happen for once that we look into this secret drawer, we should notice at once if there were a single rose or the smallest ribbon missing. Thus had she forgotten the past, locked it up and thrown away the key.

But at night she would sometimes dream of terrible things. She felt once more how the old hag, with whom she had lived, shook her by the shoulder to hurry her off to the woman with the ball flowers, in the cold morning air. At such times, she would jump up in bed and gaze out into the darkness in deadly fear. But then she felt of the silk cover and the soft pillows, her fingers followed the rich ornaments on her splendid bed, and while the little, sleepy angel-children slowly drew aside the heavy dream-curtains, she enjoyed in full measure that peculiar and inexpressible sense of well-being which we experience on discovering that a bad, hideous dream is only a dream.

. . . . . .

Leaning back on the soft cushions, she rode to the great ball at the Russian embassy. The speed of the horses decreased as they neared their destination, until the carriage reached the regular queue which allowed them to proceed only step by step.

In the great open space in front of the hotel, which was brilliantly illuminated by torches and gas-jets, a multitude of people had gathered,—not only strollers who had remained standing, but workmen in great numbers, loafers, poor women and would-be ladies, stood closely huddled together on both sides of the line of carriages. Witty remarks and indelicate jokes in the most vulgar Paris dialect rained down upon the fine people. She heard words that she had not heard for many years, and blushed at the thought that she, perhaps, was the only one in the whole long row of carriages who understood these low expressions of the dregs of Paris. She began to look at the faces about

her. She knew what they thought, what took place in these heads, packed so closely together, and, little by little, a flood of memories rushed in upon her. She defended herself as well as she could, but she did not know herself that evening.

Then she had not lost the key to the secret drawer; unwillingly she drew it out, and the memories overwhelmed her.

She recalled how often she herself, yet a child, had consumed the fine ladies with greedy eyes as they drove to balls and theaters,—how often she had cried in bitter envy over the flowers she with such great pains put together for others! Here she saw the same greedy eyes, the same unquenchable, hateful envy.

And the dark, serious men who, with a half-contemptuous, half-threatening look scanned the equipage—she knew them all.

Had she not, while a little girl, lain in a corner, and with wide-open eyes listened to their speeches about the injustice of life, about the tyranny of the rich, about the rights of the workman, which he only need reach out his hand to take?

She knew that they hated it all, from the well-fed horses and solemn coachmen to the bright, shining carriages—but most of all those who sat inside—these insatiable vampires, and these ladies whose dresses and jewels cost more gold than the work of a whole life-time could bring one of their number. And as she gazed at the line of carriages moving slowly through the crowd, another memory rose up—a half-forgotten picture from her school-life in the convent.

She happened of a sudden to think of the story about that Pharaoh who tried to pursue the Israelites through the Red Sea with his chariots of war. She saw the waves, that she had always pictured to herself red as blood, towering as a wall on both sides of the Egyptians. Then Moses spake, and stretched forth his staff over the waters, and they swallowed up Pharaoh and all his chariots.

She knew that the human wall which stood on both

sides of her was wilder and more covetous than the waves of the ocean. She knew that only a voice and a Moses was wanted to put this human sea in motion, and make it roll thundering forth to wash over the splendor of riches and power with its blood-red waves. Her heart beat fast,—trembling, she pressed into the corner of the carriage. But it was not from fear, it was in order that they might not see her,—she was ashamed before them. For the first time in her life her good fortune seemed to her an injustice, something she was ashamed of.

Was this her place, in the soft, elegant carriage, among these despots and blood-suckers? Did she not rather belong out there in the bellowing crowd, among the children of hatred? Half-forgotten thoughts and feelings raised their heads like beasts of prey that have long been held captive. She clutched her costly lace-shawl. A wild desire to destroy something, to tear something to pieces, seized her. Just then the carriage turned into the gates of the hotel.

A servant opened the door, and with her kindly smile and quiet, aristocratic grace she stepped slowly out.

A young, attaché-like creature rushed forward, and was happy when she took his arm, more enraptured when he thought he noticed an unusual lustre in her glance, but in the seventh heaven when he felt her arm tremble.

Full of pride and hope, he conducted her with marked elegance up the smooth marble steps.

. . . . . .

"Do tell me, dear madame, what kind fairy gave you this wonderful dower—that there is something distinguished about you and all that belongs to you? To mention nothing more than the flower in your hair—it has a charm of its own, as if it were bathed in the fresh morning dew. And when you dance, it seems as if the floor sways and adapts itself to your steps."

The count was quite astonished himself at this long and felicitous compliment. As a rule, it was not easy

for him to express himself coherently, consequently he expected that the beautiful lady would utter her approbation.

But he was disappointed. She leaned over the balcony where they were enjoying the cool of the evening after the dance, while gazing at the crowd and the still-arriving carriages. She did not seem to have comprehended the count's effort in the least, but he heard her whisper the mysterious word, "Pharaoh."

He was just about to complain of it, when she turned and, as she took a step toward the ball-room, stopped in front of him and looked at him with a pair of large, strange eyes, such as the count had never seen before.

"I hardly believe that any kind fairy was present at my birth, my lord,—and barely a cradle. But your acuteness has made a great discovery. I will tell you the secret of the fresh morning-dew which bathes the flowers that I wear. It is tears, my lord, that envy and disgrace, disappointment and repentance have dropped on them. And when it looks to you as if the floor were billowing while we dance, it is because it sways beneath the hatred of millions."

She had spoken with unwonted calmness, and with a pleasant greeting she disappeared from the room.

. . . . . .

The count remained behind, entirely perplexed. He glanced at the crowd of people. It was a sight he had often seen. He had made many poor and little refined jokes about this many-headed monster. But never before to-night had it occurred to him that this monster is the most uncomfortable attendant imaginable upon a palace.

Strange and annoying thoughts circled about in the count's brain. He was quite disconcerted, and it took a whole polka to restore him to his former mood.

This touching sketch has been translated for ROMANCE from the Swedish of Sigurd, by Anna Cronhjelm Wallberg.

THE OLD MOTHER.

THE old mother and sister Julia lived in a little town in a poor part of the country. They had only two little rooms, with a share of the kitchen, for Father Stark had for four years had his bed-chamber out west of the town, where the dreams of the sleepers are never disturbed.

Father Stark had been a carpenter, and a thrifty worker, especially after Emil, the son, went to Upsala University. It was amazing how much money it cost to learn enough to become an "attorney-apprentice." And papa would not touch the pennies he had set aside for mamma and Julia, but Emil must not want. What else could he do but work for two, and put away his dear pipe after dinner and turn the old best coat, which had already survived two provosts and three burgomasters in Little-burrough? And when his friend Falk, who was a shoemaker, and who had made a shoemaker of *his* son, came in on Saturday evenings, asking if Stark would come and have a toddy at the City Restaurant, there was nothing to do but to brace up and say no.

While Mr. Stark made chairs and tables and worked late at night in the draughty shop, he began by degrees to work on his own coffin without knowing it, and the village people one day missed the old wrinkled face and the white hairtufts from the shop-window.

Emil came home, looking fine in his new black swallowtailed coat, which was paid for with the money from his father's last job; and he wept, and embraced mamma and Julia, promising to soon become their support, and hurry up with his "apprenticeship."

There they sat, mother and daughter, by the little window on the alley with the geranium on the sill. Between them was the sewing-machine, humming con-

tinuously and singing merrily: "Emil is studying . . . nickenickenick . . . Emil is coming . . . nickenickenickenick . . . Emil will soon graduate . . . nicketenicketenicketenicketenick." And the geranium shed its blossoms and bloomed again and again, and mamma shed her blossoms without blooming again, and Miss Julia grew thin and pale, and got a terrible backache from tramping the machine so many years by the little window in the alley.

Sometimes the machine was silent, and a candle was lit in the middle of the day, and Miss Julia came home from the bank with big fine bank notes, which mamma stroked caressingly and with a silent blessing, before she with a sigh put them in a large envelope, on which Miss Julia put five seals.

Such letters were welcome when they reached Vaksala Street, in Upsala, where Emil usually had some good friend looking after him.

"If you are not favored by fortune! By Jove, your mother is a treasure, I must say!"

"Yes, there is no denying it, she is good. Now we must go out and have something to eat, and then we will see the boys later to-night."

But when mamma had sent off the big letter with the fine bank notes, she sighed again, and gave Miss Julia twelve cents, saying: "I guess we shall have to have codfish for dinner to-day too, deary."

When the bank funds began to sink, people who were out late evenings could see two women's heads later and later in the night by the sewing-machine at the window; and the older became whiter and more wrinkled, and the younger thinner and paler, and a never-ceasing flood of white linen welled forth from the shining machine. But the machine must have also become tired, for it did not sing quite as merrily as before.

Supremely happy sweethearts came in to the little room, bringing with them a leaping spring brook of happiness and light. Miss Julia was to sew their trousseau, and Miss Julia felt a little waft of their exuberant happiness.

But when the young, sunny, beaming girl-faces had nodded good-bye and disappeared, Miss Julia thought long thoughts, while she made table-cloths, napkins, and fine pillow-shams out of the linen packages.

There was a tablecloth with a red border for the tea-table, just large enough for two. How would it seem to be in a beautiful room, and spread the cloth over a little table before a comfortable sofa, from which two loving eyes watched eagerly every movement of the little hand, when it brought cups and cakes!

The finest muslin, elegant lace, pink ribbon, round neck and arms! Ah, and underneath should beat a young, happy, very happy, woman-heart!

See here, Miss Julia, old fool! Look out, you aching eye, that the seam is straight! tramp quickly, you little aching foot! Emil needs money.

Opposite, across the table, happy, rosy dreams still fill a snowy head. The old eyes look farther and farther into the future, the weaker they become. What are her dreams? She dreams that Emil has gone through his "apprenticeship" with honor, and is city magistrate in a big, big city, much larger than Littleburrough, a city with four or five thousand inhabitants. Mother has one of the handsomest rooms in the magistrate's big house. He is going to give a party. A magistrate must sometimes give a party.

"Come now, little mamma! The governor is waiting for mamma."

"No, Emil, I don't want to go in with your fine company."

"Now, mamma, the governor is waiting for you."

"Oh—Emil—Emil." And then he puts her little thin hand on his strong arm and takes her into the parlor with a proud look, and is not ashamed of his old mother. And the fine gentlemen bow before the host's mother, and once in a while one of them lifts his glass, saying: "Allow me, Mrs. Stark!"—Oh Emil—Emil!

"Mamma, the wood is gone, and we have not got pay for our last work."

"Oh, child, what are you saying? I dreamt such a lovely"——

"What is life worth
Without the glass—

sang a sleepy voice through the open window on Vaksala Street. Tired, with flushed cheeks and sleepy eyes, Emil tries to find a match.

There at last! But—what?—a telegram! And he had been out breakfasting all day!

"Mamma sick. Wants to see you. Come home immediately. JULIA."

He turned deathly pale, and his lips trembled. A telegram that costs a whole dollar from his poor home. He knew it had not been sent without a serious reason. Was it death? Had death come and taken her, who had sacrificed all before he had yet caused her anything but grief? And he had not seen her for three years!

He had not a cent to go with. He borrowed, begged, wept, raged and prayed. He was met everywhere with shrugs of the shoulder and a murmur: "I know you, my friend! Don't come with any more fibs!" At last he had begged the sum together.

What a journey! He sat in one corner of the railroad-car with his coat collar turned up, and his lips pressed together, so that nobody should hear his sobs, and he looked at the watch every few minutes, calculating when he should arrive.

And then twelve miles in a sleigh. His thoughts went before him, and he saw in his mind Julia, standing crying in the door, mutely pointing to the room where he plainly saw his mother lying stiff and cold. And then the perspiration covered his face and he trembled in agony.

Here he is at last in the little town, and here is the yellow house, with the geranium in the window, but—the two heads are gone, both the old and the young.

With the agony of a condemned soul he looked at Julia, and read in her face that life was still lingering.

—"But be very quiet, Emil. Mamma is out of her head; it will soon be over now."

He stumbled to the bed and hid his face at her feet.

"Well—there you are—Emil—my dear boy. Lift—lift—Emil—there is such a heavy weight on my poor chest! And Julia is too weak to take it away. Take hold—my dear boy—I am sure you can do it—you can do it. I—am glad—you have come now to take your old mother—to your home—for you know—if I had had to wait much longer—I think my heart would have been broken. Take away that weight a little—it is so heavy on my chest! Dear Emil! Thank—you, my own dear boy! Julia—go at once over to Mrs. Berglof and tell her that Emil now really has graduated. Oh—you are coming now to take us away! I don't need a *large* room—Emil—only a little—corner, where I can lie and pray God to reward my boy for all his love—and then you must be very good to Julia—poor girl—she cannot help—that—she is not so handsome and gifted as you. No, Julia, no codfish to-day—our lawyer has come home. Do they know in town that you are a lawyer? Oh—now I will try to sleep a little. No, thank you. You are very kind. I need no more wood. I am going to move now to—my—son—the law—"

. . . . . .

Then it was silent all at once. Emil lifted his tear-stained face. His old mother had gone where hope is never disappointed.

But she has many sisters left, patient, suffering, trusting sisters. Have mercy on them, O, ye young!

"The Lapps, like other peoples, have their sagas," says Anna Gulbranson, who has prepared the following legends from the Swedish for ROMANCE. "Some of these resemble those of other lands; others deal more with the characteristics of the race. For instance, we find among their oldest traditions one of a universal flood sent to destroy sinners." What followed it is described below.

TWO LAPP SAGAS.

EVEN before God overturned the world, says a Lapp folk-tale, there were people in Lapland, but when the water rose higher and the floods covered the earth, all living beings were drowned, with the exception of a sister and a brother, whom God placed on a high mountain which was called Passevare (the Holy Mountain). After the waters had left the earth, the brother and sister separated to seek other beings elsewhere. After three years' fruitless search, they met and recognized each other. They again separated, and after three more years met once more. Then they went out into the world again. When they had wandered for three more years, they again met, this time without recognition. They followed each other through life, and from them are descended all peoples, both Same (Lapps) and Swedes.

The Lapps' story of the difference between their mode of life and that of the Swedes is curious. From the beginning, they say, Swedes and Lapps were one people, and their ancestors had the same parents. During a violent storm the one became frightened and took shelter under a board, and from him are descended the Swedes who dwell in houses. The other remained under the open sky, and he was the father of the Lapps, who even to this day want no roof over their heads.

The Lapps' own sagas deal mostly with giants (Staloh) and the adventures which men have with them. Staloh are much feared, by reason of their size

and strength, and their great love for human flesh. But with all his strength the giant is generally beaten by man, for he is lazy and stupid, while the Lapp is surprisingly clever. So it is generally some adventure in which a Stalo is duped by a Lapp, man or woman, which is the subject of these stories. Here is one:

Stalo's Bride.

There was once a Stalo who courted a rich Lapp girl. Neither the girl nor her father favored the marriage, but they dared not refuse, and were even obliged to thank the giant for the honor conferred upon them. But the father made up his mind that it should come to naught. However, he was obliged to appoint a certain day when Stalo might come and obtain his bride.

Before the giant arrived, the father took a block of wood about the size of the girl, dressed it in petticoats, new cap, silver belt, shoes and buckles, and placed it in a corner of the tent, with a thick veil over the head, as is the custom of Lapp brides. When the giant came into the tent and saw the bride dressed in her best attire, he was much pleased and bade the father-in-law follow him without, to give him the reindeer which were his daughter's dowry. Meanwhile the daughter, with harnessed reindeer, was hidden behind a hill near the tent. When Stalo had got his reindeer and was killing one of them for supper, the father stole into the woods and hurried the girl away. When the giant had slaughtered the reindeer, he went into the tent to see his bride.

"Now, nannatjam" (my little darling), said Stalo, "put the kettle on the fire."

Nanna did not move.

"Oh, Nanna is shy," said he; "I must do it myself."

When the kettle had boiled a while, he said:—

"Nannatjam, now you must cut the meat."

But Nanna did not move.

"Nanna is shy; I'll have to do it myself," thought Stalo.

When the meat was cooked, he said again:

"Come now and cut the meat."

But Nanna was as quiet as ever, and did not leave the corner.

"How terribly shy she is! I must do it myself then," he thought.

After he had sliced the meat he bade her come and eat, but with like result. Nanna remained in the corner.

"I'll have all the more myself," thought he, and sat down and ate with a good appetite. After he had eaten, he bade her make the bed.

No, she remained in the corner. Then Stalo grew angry and hastily grasped the bride.

When he saw how the Lapp had fooled him, and given him a block of wood, instead of a creature of flesh and blood, he became furious and set out in pursuit of him. But the latter had gained so much time that the giant could not overtake him. Added to this, a storm arose, and Stalo lost his way in the forest. When the moon rose, the giant thought it a fire set by the Lapp, and he began to run toward it as fast as he could. But he had run so long that he was exhausted. He climbed to the top of a fir-tree to warm himself at the fire; but he froze to death. And here ends the saga.

The Crafty Lapp.

A poor Lapp had got into the hands of a Stalo. The Lapp knew well that he should be devoured if he did not circumvent the giant, so he proposed that they should try each other's strength. The trial consisted in running against a tree and thrusting in the head. The one who could push in his head the further was of course the stronger.

Stalo was the first to show his strength. He placed himself some distance from a tall pine, and rushed against it with great force. But, although the giant and the Lapp examined the tree carefully, there was not a mark to be seen. Then the Lapp said that he would show his strength on the morrow. In the night he hollowed out a number of trees and covered the openings

with bark. When the morrow came, he rushed from one tree to the other and ran in his head up to the ears. Stalo was crestfallen when he saw such strength, but proposed yet another trial.

The one who could throw Stalo's spear up the higher should be named the stronger. The giant threw it first, and threw so high that the spear could hardly be seen.

"That was a poor throw!" exclaimed the Lapp. "When I throw, it will go so far that it will remain up in the clouds."

"No, my dear fellow," cried Stalo, "I acknowledge myself conquered rather than lose my fine spear."

So the Lapp won in that trial.

When the Lapp and the giant met in the forest the next day, the former set himself to weave a basket.

"What do you intend to do with that?" asked the giant.

"I intend to carry away your treasure," answered the Lapp.

"Oh," sighed the giant, "let me keep my treasure, and I will fill your hat with silver."

"Very well," was the answer.

While the giant was getting the silver, the Lapp dug a pit, punched a hole in the crown of his hat, and placed the hat over the pit.

"What a large hat you wear!" grumbled the giant.

"Fill the hat full," commanded the Lapp, "or else I will throw you, like the spear, up among the clouds."

Then Stalo had to give the Lapp a large sum of money, and the latter became a very rich man.

If the people of Corsica ever have any innocent enjoyment, writers who describe life in that island take great pains to keep the fact out of literature. The adjectives which have been applied to the greatest of Corsicans seem to fit equally all his countrymen,—they are grand (in their own way), gloomy and peculiar. The hero of this intense and awful story by Prosper Merimée (translated for the *Argonaut*) surely deserved these epithets. The Corsicans seem to take great pleasure in killing any one who displeases them, especially if it be a "blood-relation"; and, to do them justice, the victims, "blood-relations" and all, usually deserve the worst that happens to them.

THE HOUSE OF A TRAITOR.

Mateo Falcone, when I was in Corsica, lived about half a league from the thick and bushy maquis of Porte Vecchio. He was quite rich for that country, living "nobly," in Corsican phrase (that is to say, without working himself), from the produce of his flocks, which the shepherds, a kind of nomadic race, pastured here and there in the mountains. When I saw him, about two years after the events I am about to relate, he appeared about fifty years old, at the most. Imagine a small, but robust man, with crisp, curly hair, black as jet, an aquiline nose, thin lips, large bright eyes, and a skin of deep tan color. His skill in shooting passed for something extraordinary, even in his country, where there are so many good shots. He was said to be as good a friend as he was a dangerous enemy, and, besides being neighborly and charitable, he lived in peace with all the world, in the district of Porte Vecchio.

But it was also told of him, when at Corte, where he had married his wife, that he had rid himself in a vigorous manner of a rival, who was as much dreaded in war as in love—at least, a certain shot, which much surprised this rival, as he was shaving before a little mirror hung to his window, was attributed to Mateo. The affair having died out, Mateo married. His wife had brought him at first three daughters (to his great rage), and

finally a son, whom he named Fortunato. He was the hope of the family, the heir to the name. The girls were all well married; their father could reckon, when needed, upon the daggers and carbines of his sons-in-law. The boy was only ten years old, but of a promising character.

One fine day in autumn, Mateo went early with his wife to visit one of his flocks in a clearing in the maquis. The little Fortunato desired to go with him, but the clearing was too far off, and, besides, some one must remain to guard the house—so the father refused.

He had been gone some hours, and little Fortunato was lying quietly in the sun, gazing at the blue mountains and thinking how he was going to dine next Sunday in the town with his uncle, when his meditations were suddenly interrupted by a gun-shot. He jumped up and turned toward the side of the plain, whence proceeded this noise. Several shots followed at irregular intervals, approaching nearer and nearer, till suddenly, in the path which led from the plain to Mateo's house, appeared a man wearing a long beard and a pointed cap; he was covered with rags, and dragged himself painfully along leaning on his gun. He had just been shot in the thigh.

This man was an outlaw, who, having gone during the night to buy powder in the town, had on his way fallen into an ambuscade of Corsican police. After a vigorous defence, he had succeeded in making good his retreat, hotly pursued and firing from rock to rock. But he was not far in advance of the soldiers, and his wound made it impossible for him to reach the maquis before being caught.

He approached Fortunato and said to him: "You are the son of Mateo Falcone?"

"Yes," said the boy.

"I am Giannetto Sanpiero. The soldiers are after me. Hide me, for I can go no further."

"And what will my father say if I hide you without his permission?"

"He will say you have done well."

"Who knows?"

"Hide me quickly! they are coming!"

"Wait until my father comes back."

"Wait! Curses on you! They will be here in five minutes. Come! hide me, or I will kill you!"

Fortunato replied with the greatest coolness: "Your gun is not loaded, and there are no more cartridges in your belt."

"I have my stiletto——"

"But can you run as fast as I can?" and the boy darted off, and placed himself out of the bandit's reach.

"You are not Mateo Falcone's son! Will you let me be arrested before the door of your house?"

The child appeared moved with compassion.

"What will you give me if I hide you?" he said, drawing nearer.

The outlaw fumbled in a leathern pocket, which hung from his belt, and drew from it a five-franc piece, which he had doubtless saved for the purchase of powder. Fortunato smiled at the sight of the money, and, seizing it, said to Giannetto:

"Fear nothing. I will hide you well."

Then he made a great hole in a heap of straw, or hay, near the house. Giannetto crawled in, and the child covered him up so as to leave him a little air to breathe. It was impossible to suspect, at a casual glance, that this heap of hay could hide a man. Moreover, with a cunning ingenuity worthy of a savage, he caught a cat and her kittens, and placed them on top of the straw, as if it had not been moved for some time. Finally, noticing traces of blood on the path, he carefully covered them with dust, and then calmly lay down again in the sun.

A few moments after, six men in brown uniforms, with yellow collars, and commanded by an adjutant, were before Mateo's door. The adjutant was a distant relative of Falcone. He was called Teodore Gamba, an active man, much feared by the outlaws, of whom he had already captured several.

"How do you do, little cousin?" said he, smiling to

Fortunato. "How you have grown! Have you seen a man pass here lately?"

"Oh! I am not as big as you, my cousin," said the child, with an air of simplicity.

"That will come by-and-by. But have you not seen a man pass here? Tell me."

"Have I seen a man pass?"

"Yes; a man with a pointed cap of black velvet, and a vest embroidered with red and yellow."

"A man with a black velvet pointed cap, and a vest embroidered in red and yellow?"

"Yes, yes! — answer quickly, and don't repeat my questions."

"This morning M. le Cure rode by our door on his horse, Piero. He asked me how papa was, and I told him——"

"Ha! little villain; you are playing the rogue. Tell me, quickly, which way Giannetto went, for it is he I am after, and I am certain he took this path."

"Who knows?"

"Who knows!" roared the adjutant. "I know that you have seen him!"

"Can one see all the passers-by when one is asleep?"

"You were not asleep, good-for-nothing little wretch; the gun-shots must have wakened you."

"You think, then, my cousin, that your guns make a great noise? My father's carbine makes a much louder one."

"May the devil confound you! I am very sure you have seen Giannetto. Perhaps you have even hidden him. Comrades, go into the house and see if our man is not there. He was dragging along on one foot, and he knows too much, the rogue, to try and reach the maquis while limping in that manner. Besides, the marks of blood stop here."

"And what will papa say," said Fortunato, "when he knows people have entered his house when he was absent?"

"Rascal!" said the adjutant, seizing him by the ear, "do you know that I can make you sing another tune?

After I have given you twenty blows with the flat of a sword, you will speak."

"My father is Mateo Falcone," said Fortunato, with emphasis.

"Do you know, you little scoundrel, that I can take you away to Corte, or Bastia; that I can put you in a dungeon on straw, with chains on your ankles, and I will have you guillotined, if you do not tell me where Giannetto Sanpiero is?"

The boy burst out laughing at this absurd threat, and repeated, "My father is Mateo Falcone."

"Adjutant," said one of the soldiers, in a low tone, "beware of quarreling with Mateo."

Gamba was evidently embarrassed. He talked in a low voice with his men, who had already searched the house. It was not a lengthy operation, for the cabin of a Corsican contains but a single square room. The furniture consists of a table, some benches, a chest or two, and hunting and cooking utensils. Meanwhile, the little boy played with the kittens, and seemed to take a malicious joy in the evident confusion of his cousin and the soldiers.

One of the latter approached the heap of straw, and he saw the cat, and carelessly thrust his bayonet into the straw, shrugging his shoulders, as if he felt the precaution was ridiculous. Nothing stirred, and the child's face betrayed not the slightest emotion. The adjutant and his troop were in despair. Already they looked seriously at the plain as if disposed to return whence they came, when their chief, convinced that threats produced no impression on Falcone's son, resolved to make a last effort, and try the effect of caresses and bribery.

"Little cousin," said he, "you seem a very wide-awake fellow; you'll make your mark; but you are playing an ugly game with me, and if I was not afraid of giving pain to my cousin Mateo, may the devil catch me! but I would carry you off with me."

"Bah!" said the child.

"But when my cousin Mateo returns, I shall relate

the whole affair to him, and he will whip you till the blood comes for having lied to me."

"Really!"

"You will see—but hold—you are a fine boy, and I will give you something."

"And I, my cousin, will give you a piece of advice, which is, if you wait much longer, Giannetto will be in the maquis, and then it will need more than one strong fellow like you to go and find him."

The adjutant drew from his pocket a silver watch, worth about ten crowns, and, observing that the eyes of the child sparkled as he looked at it, he said to him, holding the watch dangling by its steel chain, "Would you not be delighted to have a watch like that, hanging from your neck? You would walk the streets of Porte Vecchio as proud as a peacock, and when people would ask you, 'What's o'clock?' then you could say, 'Look at my watch and find out!'

"When I am a big boy, my uncle will give me a watch."

"Yes, but your uncle's son already has one; not as handsome as this, to be sure, but then he is younger than you."

The child sighed.

"Well, do you want this watch, little cousin?"

Fortunato, glancing at the watch from the corner of his eye, said with a bitter smile, "Why do you joke with me?"

"By heaven! I am not joking, only tell me where Giannetto is, and the watch is yours."

Fortunato smiled incredulously, and, fixing his black eyes on those of the adjutant, he tried to read there how much to believe of what he said.

"May I lose my epaulets!" cried the adjutant, "if I do not give you this watch, provided you do as I ask. My men are witnesses, and I cannot retract my promise."

As he spoke he held the watch nearer, so that it almost touched the child's face. Fortunato showed plainly in his face the struggle in his soul between covetousness and the respect due to hospitality. His

naked breast heaved violently, and he seemed half-suffocated. However, the watch continued to turn and twist about, and sometimes struck the end of his nose. Finally, little by little, his right hand rose slowly toward the watch, the ends of his fingers touched it, and he felt its weight before the adjutant dropped the end of the chain. The dial-plate was sky-blue, the case newly polished, and, in the sun, it shone like fire. The temptation was too strong!

Fortunato raised his left hand slowly, and pointed with his thumb, over his left shoulder, at the heap of straw. The adjutant instantly understood his gesture. He let go the end of the chain, and Fortunato felt himself sole possessor of the watch. He arose with the agility of a deer, and ran a few steps from the heap of hay, which the soldiers immediately began to overturn. It was not long before a man, covered with blood, poniard in hand, crawled out; but, as he tried to rise to his feet, his wounded thigh did not allow him to stand erect. He fell, and the adjutant threw himself upon him and seized his stiletto, and he was soon securely tied, despite his struggles. Lying on the ground, and bound up like a fagot, Giannetto turned his head toward Fortunato, and hissed, "Son of a dog!" The child tossed back the five-franc piece Giannetto had given him, feeling that he had ceased to deserve it; but the outlaw paid no attention to this movement. He said coolly to the adjutant:

"My dear Gamba, I cannot walk; you will be forced to carry me to the town."

"You ran quicker than a squirrel a while ago," replied the cruel conqueror; "but be easy; I am so glad to have caught you that I could carry you for a league on my back without fatigue. As for the rest, comrade, we will make you a litter out of some branches and your cloak, and at Crespole's farm we shall find horses."

"All right," said the prisoner, "put also a little straw on the litter, that I may lie easier."

While the soldiers were employed, some in making a kind of litter out of branches, and the others in dressing

Giannetto's wound, Mateo Falcone and his wife suddenly appeared at the turn of a path which led to the maquis. The woman walked slowly, bending painfully under the weight of an enormous sack of chestnuts, while her husband strolled by her side, carrying only his two guns, one in his hand, the other in his shoulder-belt, for it is unworthy of a Corsican to carry any burden but his arms.

As he caught sight of the soldier, his first idea was that they had come to arrest him. But why? Had Mateo any trouble with the law? No; he enjoyed a good reputation, but he was also a Corsican and a mountaineer, and there are few such who, in searching their memory, cannot recall some peccadilloes, such as gunshots, dagger-thrusts, and other like trifles. Mateo, more than most men, had a clear conscience in this respect; for more than ten years he had aimed his gun at no man. But he was prudent, and he took a position to make a brave defence, if necessary.

"Wife," said he to Guiseppa, "put down your sack and be ready."

She obeyed immediately. He gave her the gun from his shoulder-belt, which might cramp his movements. He then loaded the one he held, and advanced slowly toward his house, skirting the trees, which bordered the road, ready, at the least hostile demonstration of the soldiers, to throw himself behind the largest trunk, whence he could fire under shelter. His wife followed in his tracks, holding the spare gun and its cartridge-box. The business of a good housewife is to load her husband's gun in case of a combat.

On the other side of the field, the adjutant was much troubled at seeing Mateo advance in this manner, with measured steps, gun in hand, and his finger on the trigger. "If, perchance," thought he, "Mateo should be a relative of Giannetto, or his friend, and he wished to defend him, the contents of his two guns could reach us, one after the other, as sure as a letter by the post, if he aimed at me, notwithstanding our relationship." In this perplexity, he took a brave resolution, to advance alone

toward Mateo, and relate the whole affair to him, accosting him as an old friend; but the short distance that separated him from Mateo appeared terribly long.

"Ah, my brave comrade," cried he, "how goes it? It is I, Gamba, your cousin."

Mateo, without replying, had stopped, and while the other spoke, slowly raised the barrel of his gun, so that it pointed to the sky, at the instant the adjutant reached him.

"Good-day, comrade," said the adjutant, holding out his hand; "it is a long time since I last saw you."

"Good-day, comrade!"

"I came to say 'How do you do,' as I passed, to you and my good cousin, Pepa. We have made a long journey to-day, but we must not complain of fatigue, for we have made a famous capture. We have just seized Giannetto Sanpiero."

"God be praised!" cried Guiseppa; "he stole a milch-goat from us last week."

These words rejoiced Gamba.

"Poor devil!" said Mateo; "he was hungry."

"The knave fought like a lion," continued the adjutant, somewhat mortified; "he killed two of my men, and, not content with that, broke Corporal Chardou's arm—but that is no great harm; he is only a Frenchman. Afterward, he was hidden so finely that the devil himself could not have found him. I should never have discovered him, had it not been for my little cousin, Fortunato."

"Fortunato!" exclaimed Mateo.

"Fortunato," said Gamba; "yes, Giannetto was hidden under that heap of straw yonder. But my little cousin showed me his hiding-place. So I will tell his uncle in town, and he can send him a fine present for his trouble. And his name and yours will appear in the report that I shall send to the attorney-general."

"Damnation!" said Mateo, in a thick and husky voice.

They had reached the detachment by this time. Giannetto was already lying on the litter, and ready to depart. When he saw Mateo in Gamba's company, he

smiled strangely, then, turning his head toward the door of the house, he spat savagely on the sill, crying: "The house of a traitor!"

Only a man who had resolved to die would have dared to use the word "traitor" in connection with Falcone. A stab from a stiletto would have immediately avenged the insult. But Mateo made no other gesture than carrying his hand to his head, as if overcome with grief. Fortunato had gone into the house when he saw his father arrive, but he soon reappeared, carrying a bowl of milk, which he offered to the prisoner, his head hanging down.

"Away, cur!" cried the outlaw to him. Then, turning to one of the guard, "Comrade," said he, "give me a drink."

The soldier handed him his gourd, and Giannetto drank the water given him by a man with whom he had just exchanged shots. Afterward, he begged that they would tie his hands so that they would be crossed on his breast, instead of having them bound behind his back.

"I like," said he, "to lie at my ease." They hastened to satisfy him; then the adjutant gave the signal of departure, bade adieu to Mateo, who did not reply, and they decended, with rapid steps, toward the plain.

Ten minutes passed before Mateo opened his mouth. The child looked, uneasily, sometimes at his mother, then at his father, who, leaning on his gun, gazed at him with an expression of furious anger.

"You begin well," said Mateo, finally, in a calm voice; but a terrible one to any one who knew the man thoroughly.

"My father!" cried the child, advancing, tears in his eyes, as if to throw himself at his knees. But Mateo cried: "Back!" and he stopped, sobbing and motionless, a few steps from his father.

Guiseppa drew near. She had just perceived the chain of the watch, one end of which hung from Fortunato's shirt.

"Who gave you that watch?" she asked, in a severe tone.

"My cousin, the adjutant."

Falcone seized the watch, and throwing it violently against a stone, broke it into a thousand pieces.

"Woman," said he, "is this my child?"

The brown cheeks of Guiseppa turned a vivid scarlet. "Have a care what you say, Mateo. Do you remember to whom you speak?"

"I ask your pardon, wife. This child is the first of the race of Falcone who has been guilty of treachery."

The sobs and tears of Fortunato redoubled, and Mateo kept his lynx eyes sternly fixed upon him. Finally, he struck the butt-end of his gun on the ground, threw it over his shoulder, and took his way toward the maquis, bidding Fortunato follow him. The child obeyed.

Guiseppa ran after Mateo, and seized his arm. "He is your son," said she, in a trembling voice, fixing her black eyes on those of her husband, as if to read there what was passing in his soul.

"Leave me," said Mateo, "I am his father!"

The mother embraced her son, and entered the house weeping; throwing herself on her knees before an image of the Virgin, she prayed fervently.

Meanwhile, Falcone walked down the path some two hundred paces, and stopped on reaching a little ravine. He sounded the earth, and found it soft and easy for digging. The spot appeared a favorable one.

"Fortunato," said he, "stand yonder near that great stone."

The child obeyed, and fell on his knees.

"Say your prayers," said Falcone.

"My father, my father, do not kill me!"

"Say your prayers!" repeated Mateo, in a voice which made the child's flesh creep.

The child, sobbing and stammering, repeated the "Pater Noster" and the "Credo." At the end of each prayer, the stern father responded "Amen."

"Are those all the prayers you know?" asked he.

"My father, I also know the 'Ave Maria,' and the litany my aunt taught me."

"Repeat them!"

The child finished the litany, in a sinking voice.

"Have you finished?"

"Oh! my father, forgive me. Mercy! I will never do so any more! I will beg my cousin, the adjutant, so hard, he will release Giannetto!"

He was still speaking—Mateo raised his gun and took aim, saying: "May God pardon you!"

The child made a desperate effort to rise and embrace his father's knees, but it was too late; Mateo fired, and Fortunato fell, stone dead.

Without casting a glance at the body, Mateo took his way back to the house to get a spade to dig his son's grave. He had gone but a few steps when he met Guiseppa, who was running toward him, alarmed at the noise of the shot.

"What have you done?" she shrieked.

"Justice!"

"Where is he?"

"In the ravine. I am going to bury him. He died like a Christian. I made him recite his prayers. God rest his soul!"

The charming simplicity of motive and the exaltation of long loyalty (usually tested by an absence of some years, money-getting in America) which are especially characteristic of the Scandinavian love-story are the salient features of this beautiful little tale. Its origin is unknown.

A CHANGED SKIN.

A NORWEGIAN LOVE-STORY.

She followed him all day long like a little dog. If he ran, she ran; fell and scratched her knees, cried and was lifted up again. Thus it went from the week's beginning to its end. He grew tired of her, and would have liked to run away from her. But he did not dare, for she was his master's daughter, and he was—well, there was the rub—he did not know who he was.

He woke up one fine day and found himself born. He was christened, in a random way, Ola, and was put on the parish, as they say. Jeus Oestruo took him as his share of the parish burdens. When he was six years old, he could be made useful enough to earn his food and shelter. Jeus Oestruo then wanted to send him away, but his little daughter Birgit was so fond of him that he decided to keep him.

When Ola was twelve years old, he could kick a cap from a nail high above his head. Birgit was so fond of Ola that everything he did seemed admirable. Once she said a bad word, and Ola was whipped for it.

"It is time now to send that bad boy away," said the mother.

"Send him to the mountains," said the father; "he is big enough now to herd the cattle."

So Ola was sent to the mountains. Barefooted and bareheaded, with a pair of leather patched kneebreeches hanging by a piece of string, he roamed with his alpine horn over the wide mountain plains, ate berries, caught fish, set traps, and was happy. He hardly thought once

of the little girl down in the valley, though it pleased him when the dairymaids told him she cried for him.

One day, late in the summer, she came up to the dairy with her mother. When she saw him, she flung herself down upon the grass and screamed with delight.

"Get up, child," said her mother, "don't act like a fool."

She got up, a little shamefaced, and hid herself behind her mother's skirt. But when her mother had reached the hut, she ran up to him and hugged him. While the cattle were being milked, he went to look after his things. She followed him, proud in the thought that he tolerated her.

"Look here," he cried, lifting up a brown hare, "isn't that a big fellow?"

"What is it?" she asked.

"It is a hare."

"No, it isn't a hare. A hare is white."

"It is brown in summer. It changes its skin."

That made a deep impression on her.

"How does he do it?" she asked, after a while.

"I don't know."

"Has he two skins, one inside the other?"

Instead of answering, he took his knife and cut the hare's skin.

"No," he said, "he hasn't got more'n one."

. . . . . .

The time came when he had to go to the parson to prepare for confirmation. It so happened that she went the same year. She was a tall, fine girl now, and all the lads of the parish tried to show off before her. Ola would have liked to do the same, if he had had anything to show off. But, though he had a coat now, it was a cast-off one of Jeus Oestruo's, which was much too big for him. His boots, too, and his trousers had seen better days before they made his acquaintance.

He walked aside from the rest, his ears burning when any one looked at him. But if any one dared to mock him, he used a pair of fists which inspired respect. He was a handsome enough lad, and finely made; but his

clothes and his frowsy hair made him look ugly. Heavy thoughts came to him, and a fierce, defiant spirit was kindled within him.

The world seemed all out of gear. He longed to be back in the mountains, where he could be alone with his birds and beasts. The girls giggled when he went by; and when he heard their laughter growing louder as the distance increased, he wanted to kill somebody.

It was at such a time that Birgit sought him and spoke kindly to him.

"You mustn't mind the girls," she said; "they laugh at everything. They don't mean anything by it. It's just a way they have."

"Somebody will come to harm if you ever do it," he answered fiercely.

"That is foolish talk," she gently remonstrated. "I know you too well, Ola. You wouldn't harm me."

"Ah, you don't understand me," he said; "it's no use talking."

"O, yes, I do understand you, Ola," she replied, with a smile; "and I wish you would let me say one thing to you before I go."

"Say it."

"I wish—I wish," she stammered, while a quick blush sprang to her cheeks, "No, I think I won't say it, after all," she finished, and turned to go.

"Yes, say it," he entreated, seizing her hand.

"Well, it is this; it seemed so easy to say a moment ago, and now it seems so hard."

"I want to hear it."

"Well, I—I wish you could do as the hare, change your skin."

She drew her hand away from his and ran down the hillside, so that the stones and dry leaves flew about her.

That night he picked a quarrel with Thorger Sletten, who was said to be attentive to Birgit, and he thrashed him. All the following winter he kept watch of her from afar, and picked quarrels with everybody whom she seemed to favor.

"Change my skin," he pondered. "Change my skin, like the hare. How, oh! how, can I do it?"

This thought followed him day and night. One day, in the spring, an emigrant-ship bound for America appeared at the mouth of the river. Ola packed together his few traps and went up to Oestruo's to say good-by. He met Birgit in the birch grove behind the barn.

"Well, Ola, where are you going?" she asked, as she saw him coming with bundle and staff in hand.

"To America."

"America!" she cried. "America!"

The answer seemed to frighten her. She turned pale and caught hold of a birch tree for support. He watched her narrowly.

"What are you going to do in America, Ola?" she asked softly.

"Change my skin," he replied with a vigor that startled her.

"Oh, is it I who have put you up to that, Ola?"

"Yes, thank God! it was you," he cried, drawing her close up to him; "and if I come back within five years with a changed skin, will you promise to wait for me?"

"I promise," she whispered, weeping quietly upon his shoulder.

"Then may God bless you, Birgit," he cried, gazing into her face, "for you have saved me."

. . . . . .

Five years from that day a young man was seen hastening up the hillside to Oestruo's. He had a big slouch hat on his head, and he was well dressed. His face was strong, square and determined; his eyes danced with joy, for in his pocket he had a royal marriage license with which he meant to surprise somebody up at Oestruo's farm. It was five years to-day since he left her, and it was five years she had promised to wait for him. For this hour he had toiled, saved, and suffered for five long weary years. He had been a silver miner in Leadville when the place was yet new, and he had sold his claim for fifty thousand dollars.

As he was hurrying along, an old woman, who was sitting by the roadside, hailed him.

"Gentlefolks out walking to-day?" she said, holding out her hand for a penny.

"Gentlefolks?" he cried, with a happy laugh; "gentlefolks, did you say, Gurid?"

"Yes, I said gentlefolks," said the old woman, gazing at the silver coin he had pressed into her hand.

"Why, Gurid, I am Ola, who used to herd cattle at Oestruo's dairy."

"You, Ola! who was on the parish? Then you must have changed your skin."

"That was what I went to America for," he answered laughing.

The church lay half-way up the hillside. There Ola sat down to rest, for he had walked far and was tired. Presently, he heard music up under the ledge of the forest; there was one clarionet and several fiddles. A bridal party! Yes, there was the bride, with a silver crown upon her head and shining brooches upon her bosom. Pistol-shots were heard, and singing and laughter. The procession came nearer.

Now the master of the ceremonies opened the church doors wide, and went to meet the bride and groom. Ola sat still, like a rock; but a strange numbness came over him; the ground seemed to rock under his feet. As the party drew near to the gate of the churchyard, he arose and stood tall and grave, in the middle of the road. The fiddlers stared at him and stepped aside. Then came Birgit Oestruo and Thorger Sletton. She looked pale and sad; he defiant.

"You didn't expect me to your wedding, Birgit Oestruo?" he said, and stared hard at her. She gave a scream; the crown fell from her head; she rushed forward, and flung her arms about his neck. He held her long and close.

"Now come," he cried, "whoever dares, and I'll make a merry bridal."

Jeus Oestruo stepped forward and spoke. His voice shook with wrath, and the veins swelled upon his brow.

"Here I am," he said. "If you want the girl, you shall fight for her."

"Not with you, old man," retorted Ola; "but with Thorger I'll fight. Let him come forward."

The bridal guests made a ring on the green, and the bridegroom came slowly forward.

"Hard luck," he said, "to have to fight for your bride on your wedding day."

Fight? Birgit, who in her happiness had been blind and deaf, woke up with a start. She unwound her arms from Ola's neck, and stepped between the two men.

"Oh, do not fight, do not fight!" she entreated, holding out her hands first to one claimant and then to the other.

"Out of the way, girl, out of the way!" shouted her father, seizing her by the arm.

"No," she cried, "I shall stand where I stand! You know, father, for whom I have waited these five years. You know whom I have loved since I was a child. But you used force against me and threats. Now he has come back. I am no longer afraid of you."

"Whoever will be my wedding-guest, let him follow," shouted Ola, "for I have in my hand a royal license to be married to Birgit, Jeus Oestruo's daughter."

He pulled the paper from his pocket and swung it above his head.

"All that money can buy you shall have," he added. "I'll make a wedding the fame of which shall be heard in seven parishes round."

He took the bride's arm and marched into the church.

The wedding guests looked at Jeus Oestruo, who was venting his wrath upon the groom.

"You coward," he yelled, "you let the girl be snatched away before your very nose, and do not strike a blow for her! I am glad enough to be rid of such a son-in-law. Come, folks, we'll have our wedding yet. A girl belongs to him who can catch her."

With a wrathful snort he stalked in through the open church-door, and the wedding-guests slowly followed.

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An interesting legend, which is accepted as true among the educated Mohammedans of India, is embodied in the following thrilling story, written for ROMANCE by Harry Willard French.

A DAUGHTER OF THE DESERT.

A CARAVAN was plodding southward, long ago, over the glistening sand; under the torturing sun; crossing the great desert between Persia and India. The path was plainly marked by white and bleaching bones.

There were skeletons at every feast, no matter where they spread their mats; for this was the great highway between the old world of Persia and the newly conquered realm of India.

The caravan was as mixed as a caravan could be. It was a combination of small families and individuals, making the journey together for mutual protection against the thugs and Brinjari who infested the desert. Each family lived and moved by itself, holding little intercourse with the rest, except in time of danger, when they united under a common chief.

Among the poorest yet most exclusive of the pilgrims was a family of three—a father, mother and boy of five years. Very often they looked sadly backward; then, as if struggling to gather hope from the opposite direction, they looked forward again, over that interminable gleam of sand.

All that they possessed was borne upon the back of one donkey, and yet his burden was so light that the mother rode beside it. It was nothing, in fact, but a bag of grain, on one side, for the donkey, a sack of maize meal on the other, with a bunch of red peppers for the family and the mutual goat-skin of water between them.

The mother, sitting behind the water-cask, was a beautiful Persian woman; frail and delicate, and very different from what one would expect to find upon the desert with a mixed caravan. The father, a tall and

powerful man, walked beside the donkey, and much of the time the boy sat upon his shoulders.

These shoulders were so broad and strong that the little fellow could not imagine himself to be any possible burden; his black eyes were merry, and his red lips laughed, and the plume on his turban bobbed about as he tossed his head, as proud as any king upon a royal throne. And it was, indeed, a throne that was royal, little as he or any one else, except the woman riding upon the donkey, dreamed of such a thing. In truth, however, he was sitting upon the shoulders of the crown prince of Persia.

Serious complications had arisen between the royal family and various factions of the government, endangering the life of the little prince, and since he was two years old he had been carefully hidden. Even the boy himself was kept in ignorance of his rank. The secret escaped, at last, and his life was again in peril. His parents' only hope lay in removing him to some distant land. They thought of India; and rather than trust the precious charge to others, they went themselves, disguised as pilgrims, in the mixed caravan.

It was the eighth day of their journey, and but six days more remained. "Have courage, Light of My Eyes," the man said, cheerfully. "More than the half is behind us, and better days lie beyond this desert sand. Thy face is sadder than its wont. Thou art not so well to-day."

"I am as well, dearest Breath of My Body," she replied, laying her hand tenderly upon her husband's shoulder, while the boy, sitting upon the other shoulder, leaned over, behind his father's head, to caress it. "I am as well; but I dreamed a dream, last night, three times repeated. I stood alone in the desert, with our son. I leaned upon a staff, and he on me. Out of the South there came a mighty hand and grasped the staff."

The mother shuddered, and for a moment clung, trembling, to her husband's shoulder. Then in a faltering voice she continued,—"I gave one cry to Allah, as I fell, and lo! an angel stood beside me and each

time, in my dream, I heard him say, 'Fear not. Thou must go hence, but I shall abide.' "

The husband tried to comfort her, but he too was troubled. In his day and country a dream thrice repeated assumed the importance of a message from the Most High.

Late in the afternoon the mother touched her husband, and silently pointed to the south, where a little cloud lay just above the horizon. He shaded his eyes from the fierce glare, and watched it anxiously as he walked. Others seeing him did the same till soon, without a word of command, the whole caravan stood still, watching that cloud in dire apprehension.

It came from the desert, not the sky. It grew rapidly larger, and came directly toward them. It was not caused by the wind, neither was it a peaceful caravan. In great commotion and consternation, preparations were made for such feeble defence as could be offered. The strongest men were ordered to the front, to receive the first assault, and of course the stalwart father was one of the first to be selected.

Tears stood in the eyes of his frail wife as she bravely said farewell to him, adding, "I fear it is my dream, for yonder hand cometh from the south and thou art my staff, my heart and my breath."

Far in the distance, beneath the cloud of dust, keen eyes could now easily discern the forms of armed men, urging their fleet horses over the sand.

The husband hesitated for a moment, then he replied: "Fear not. I will not leave thee. It will be a hopeless struggle. We might as well go on, and, if danger comes to us, face it by ourselves."

He took the bridle of the donkey and started forward.

"Coward!" cried the leader of the caravan, seeing that he did not obey, "Go forward as I bid thee and help the guard."

"I have my own to protect, and for it I ask no help from thee," the father replied, calmly, and, to the astonishment of every one, he went out alone upon the desert with the two he loved.

He urged the donkey forward at its utmost speed, but they were still near enough to hear the savage yells as the robbers came upon the caravan. They did not dare look back, but it was easy to understand the sounds which reached them;—the clash of arms, the shrieks of the dying, the yell of the victor, the groan of the victim, the silence of triumph, as when the vulture begins to glut himself upon his prey.

Harder and faster the father urged the donkey till at last the dumb animal, utterly exhausted, lay down upon the sand and refused to move.

"Take the boy with thee, my Sun and my Moon," the father said, in a choking voice. "Go as fast and as far as thy strength will bear thee. If the animal will not move, then I will take the food and water from his back and follow as quickly as I may. It may be that the robbers will not care to come after us, and if they do, they will not go beyond the burden, which is all they seek. Go! It was for him that we started. It is for him that we struggle now. Go, and Allah be by thy side."

It was not a time for words. The mother looked into her husband's eyes, knowing well that it was for the last time; but she looked at their little boy and, silently taking his hand, turned forward again, upon the path marked by whitening skeletons.

On and on and on the two pressed forward, as long as their strength held out. They walked, they ran. They rested for a moment, and then toiled on again. The rolling sand-hills soon hid the objects behind them from their view, and the sand shrubs rose about them. No sound, no sign came from behind, and when the red sun sank into the sea of sand, the mother fell prostrate, under a dry and crackling sage bush, alone in the desert with her son. There was a wild gleam in her dark eyes as they looked upon the boy beside her. The lips were parched that tried to speak to him. The hand was cold as ice that caressed him, as he lay upon the sand, with his head upon her arm, and slept.

Hour after hour those eyes, too full of agony for

tears, watched the stars as they flashed and sparkled. Hour after hour the ears were strained to catch the sound of the footfall of the man she loved, in a desperate hope against the surest conviction that the Hand from the South had taken away the staff. Hour after hour, in bitterest agony, she saw the night drag out its cold and silent length, and morning dawned.

Fiery and red, as when it set, the sun came up out of the great, lifeless sea, and the boy opened his eyes. He turned to his mother. She was lying upon the sand, at a little distance. Her eyes were open, but she was only partially conscious. She did not notice him. He crept toward her. What was it she was holding in her arms? Could it be an angel? He had listened while she told her dream, and had understood more than his parents supposed. He realized that his father had been taken away and that his mother had fallen upon the desert. Could that be the angel? He heard the plaintive wail of a little baby girl, pleading for nourishment which the mother could not give, and wondered if it could be the voice of an angel saying, "Fear not. Thou must go hence, but I shall abide."

In a great blazing whirl the sun swept over the trackless desert. Only the dry sage bush protected the three from its fury. The little, pleading wail grew fainter and fainter. The sobs of the suffering boy were stifled in the folds of his mother's sarai.

The tortures of the day were over at last, but it was only that the tortures of another night might begin. The stars were like flashing darts to pierce them. Cold and white the moonlight flooded the wide expanse of death. Throughout the day no groan or murmur had escaped from the pale lips of the mother, but as the night came on, she breathed one deep, quivering sigh, and, slowly rising, looked down upon her two little ones. She felt the icy chill of death creeping over her. She could not lie there dead between them. She took off her long sarai, and wound it about the baby girl. She took off her only remaining garment, and laid it gently over the boy. "She is thy sister," she whis-

pered in his ear. "Allah will help thee to guard her until I come again."

Kneeling on the sand, with her face toward Mecca, she touched her forehead to the ground, and the little boy remembered afterward that she said, "Thou knowest they are a prince and princess, born to the throne of Persia. They are thine. Do with them as thou wilt." Then she rose to her feet and, weak and tottering, walked slowly away from them.

That was the last that was ever known of her.

In a stupor between death and sleep, the little ones lay till the sun was ready to rise again; when out of the desert there came another caravan, moving as they had been moving, from Persia toward India.

The muffled tread of the multitude of camels and dromedaries did not disturb the little ones, though the desert trembled under their motion, as the long line swept onward in the silver-gray of the early morning hours.

There was no mixture of elements about this caravan. Gold and jewels glistened even upon the camel-trappings. Swords, and shields and spears shone and flashed in the early morning light. The camels were young and fleet, and the swift-footed dromedaries seemed almost to glide along the glistening surface.

Why not? The lord of the caravan was the great sheik Selim Christi, prime minister of Akbar, the Emperor of India. He was returning from a royal embassage to the throne of Persia, and the great white camel which bore him, in the midst of the royal guard, was passing the sage bush when a faint wail from the folds of the swaddled sarai attracted his attention. He lifted his hand. The entire caravan halted, and at his command soldiers opened the sarai and discovered Allah's treasure hidden there.

The clanking of their armor woke the boy and, exhausted though he was, he struggled to his feet and pushed and fought the soldiers of Akbar, crying, "Away with you! Away! You have killed my father! You have killed my mother! You may kill me, but you

shall not touch her! She is my sister. Allah sent her here, and left me to take care of her!"

The thing above all others which the sheik Selim Christi admired was courage. He looked at the little fellow and smiled.

"Fear not, little one," he said. "We are not the ones who wronged thee; neither shall a hair of thy head be harmed. Lo, the Prophet hath sent us, and bidden us care for thee."

The children were given in charge of the women of the caravan, and soldiers were detailed to guard them. Their lives were staked upon the lives of the two to whom Selim Christi offered his protection, and when that gorgeous caravan swept through the marble gate of Futthepore Sackri, the magnificent capital where Akbar reigned in all his glory, the children were rapidly gaining health and strength.

They were taken at once into the royal harem, though nothing was known of their parentage; for the secret which had been disclosed to the boy in his mother's prayer only became impressed upon him as he recalled it, again and again, in the years that followed and treasured it in his heart till, later in life, he had an opportunity to prove it true.

Under the powerful patronage of the prime minister the boy grew and prospered. The blood of monarchs flowing in his veins spoke for itself, and when his patron died, he took his place as second only to the Emperor of India. He married the daughter of his preserver, and became the father of the world-renouned Nur Mahal, wife of the Emperor Shah Jehan; the woman whose tomb, the Taj Mahal, at Agra, is known, wherever that which is beautiful is admired, as the finest specimen of architecture in the wide world to-day; while the Desert's daughter, the little sister whom he defended, the angel who came to his mother, well fulfilled the promise of the dream. She did abide; not only for her time but for all time; for she was Lalla Rookh, the heroine of Tom Moore's immortal poem.

There is a great deal of patriotism and fireworks in this charming Fourth-of-July story, by Harriet Prescott Spofford; and it is expressed with all of that literary grace which has been only one of many elements in giving Mrs. Spofford her place as one of the leading short-story writers of the world.

HONOR AND THE FOURTH.

"Oh!" cried Honor, as some sort of a gun again made her start and cover her little pink shells of ears with her white hands. "Oh, why wasn't I born under a despotism!"

The doctor was coming down the stairs and he heard her.

He paused a moment in a bewildered way, as if his own ears had played him false, or as if,—familiar as he was with this language not his own,—so familiar that he spoke it more accurately than most of those do whose mother-tongue it is,—he must have mistaken its meaning now.

Honor would hardly have cared to be overheard by this person, had she thought before she spoke. For his unknown history, his grand manner, and his heroic build had caused many a fancy of hers to flutter round him. With his youth, his learning, his great stature, his fair, cold beauty, his bold and noble cast of countenance, he had seemed to Honor more like some Scandinavian god than an ordinary mortal; and she saw in his slightest action indications of a fineness of breeding which spoke of very different usages from those about him now.

Dr. Basil had not been long in the town, to which he had come quite unheralded; but he had already conquered his place there, and had then exhibited, to those desiring or deserving it, certain credentials which announced, in a way admitting no dispute, that Dr. Basil was a man of family, of honor, and one whose word was intrinsic truth itself. Of course there were all sorts of wild rumors afloat concerning him in the large

old country-town: he was a Russian; he was a prince; he was a revolutionist. But at length the popular belief had accepted the fact that he was merely a Polish student who had been too much interested in politics, and had come to this country to better his fortunes. But whatever he had been or was now, he went about his professional work with a concentration of purpose that gave him small time for play; and no woman in all the place, save Honor herself, had ever seen that blue eye of his lingering on her, or that face softening, and gravely stern again as he addressed her. And now it was she whom he heard uttering that profane sentence in this consecrated air, on this holy day! "Oh, why wasn't I born under a despotism!"

"Honor! Honor! Honor!" rose the response from the whole family,—at least from so many of them as had breakfasted together, for Florio had just gone out, and Tom had not yet come in, and Ben had already gone to bed *hors du combat*—it was his head the Doctor had been called to sew up.

"You, Honor," said her father, "the child of a free country!"

"I wonder where you'd be," cried the indignant and patriotic Ted, "if you *had* been born under a despotism? Picking the buttermilk out of your teeth!

"Theodore!" said his horrified mother, who had just left Ben with the Doctor and the boy's Aunt Mercy, Florio's mother, impressing upon him the fact that they who take the sword must perish by the sword—and had come down for a late cup of coffee.

"She'd have been nobody and nothing," muttered Teddy, irrepressibly. "And hear her! on Fourth of July morning!"

"Oh, Ted finds his own account in his patriotism," said Honor.

"I'm afraid he has the right on his side," said his father, "for all his rude expression. I must say I am shocked myself."

"I have been shocked," rejoined Honor; "I have been shocked all night long, and all this morning, and

shall be all day. It has been one succession of shocks since midnight. There were the whole crew of the grammar-school boys on the fence yelling for Ben, firing off pistols and blowing horns, till he and Tom tumbled down and out with them. I think such mothers as theirs ought to be kept without sleep for a week!"

"I was one of them," meekly suggested her own mother, leaning her tired head on her hand.

"Poor little mother! You couldn't help yourself, and you've reaped your reward already! Papa could have helped it. My quarrel is with papa,—he'll go to sleep this afternoon when I read him the paper and never know he was awake all night. As for me, the moment I dropped into a little nightmare, a horn, or a pistol, or a long fusillade of fire-crackers waked me; I was all worn out when the joy-bells began to ring at five o'clock and kept it up for an hour, and then the cannon gave a salute for every State, and at every report Mrs. Norcross's baby shrieked in terror; and good gracious! papa, how many States there are! Oh, I wish half had seceded and Canada had swallowed the rest! And then there were guns and torpedoes and yells on every side, and a parade of Calithumpians with a band of discords at that unearthly hour, and in comes Ben with his head laid open by a ramrod, and we shall be lucky if there are as many fingers and toes and teeth and eyes in the family to-night as we started with in the morning!"

"Oh, *shall* we?" said Ted, in a fine rage now.

"I think," she went on, "that old John Adams must have been beside himself when he advised that the Fourth of July should be celebrated with gunpowder. I am *sure* I wish I had been born under a despotism where they had nothing to celebrate, and didn't celebrate with explosions and accidents when they had!"

"No queen's birthdays," said her mother, "no royal salutes—"

"No broadsides, no bombs, no nothing!" said Ted.

"You would rather have dynamite," said her father.

"At any rate, there'd be no floral processions for me

to attend to now," returned Honor. "And I'm worn out with settling the claims of 'Persia' and of 'Greece' as to oleanders or roses on their platforms, and the pretensions of 'Italy' as to going before 'Spain,' and the determination of the girls in 'England' to go without a canopy, for fear they won't be seen, and of the girls in 'Hindostan' to have a canopy for fear they'll be tanned. I must hurry now in all this heat, and help start them. They're as happy as they can be, but I pity them. Aren't you coming, papa?"

"Do you think it will be worth while, to see a parcel of anachronisms? and you in such a frame of mind!"

"Oh!" said Honor, laughing, and showing her teeth, white as rice-kernels. "I have scolded myself into the best of moods, and you needn't be afraid. I suppose another charm of this delightful day is that there'll be no dinner served."

"Why, Honor, you wouldn't keep the servants at home and at work to-day?"

"Oh, no; it's Independence Day—it's all right. We only pay them for staying at home and at work to-day. It's part of the free-country business. But, as I said, I wish I'd been born under a despotism!"

And she ran off for her hat and parasol and the starting-point of the flower-people's parade.

Poor Honor's ill-humor was not a very serious affair; the sunshine was always just behind the shower with her. But to-day it was not merely the loss of sleep, but in the great tent, where they were trimming the platforms for the procession, last evening and the evening before, had this young Dr. Basil come near her? After having brought her to the place by an accident that threw her into his charge, had he not left her, at Mrs. Scott's bidding, and then suddenly vanished?—and if it had been a patient that had called him out, had he taken the trouble to explain it? Instead, had he not simply stayed away from the whole thing as if all engaged upon it were too trivial for his remembrance? And what had put her particularly in an ill-humor was the fact that she cared. And why should

she care? Why should a stranger, coming to the place without friends, without money, have made himself such a power that his friendship was distinction to any of the men, his rare smile sunshine to all of the women? To all the women? To one of them at least! A yellow-haired young giant, of despotic manner and strange learning, who had already done wonderful things in his profession, and who seemed wrapped in that or in his gloomy thoughts, he never sought her society, loitered by her side, or gave her, to her knowledge, a second glance. It was humiliating to a girl who had had all her little world at her feet, and—and—and it was heart-breaking!

Dr. Basil, who had stood in the doorway during these various remarks, looking from one to another a little wonderingly, came out of the house with her,—a cloud upon his face.

"When I have children," said he, with the least possible accent distributed over his words, "they shall always keep the Fourth of July with fire-crackers, and toy cannon, and Greek fire, and—"

"And broken noses and torn fingers," said Honor, who had looked up in surprise, but accommodated herself to the medical point of view. "You will lose a great deal of practice on that day, then, for it will take your time to amputate their limbs, and bind up their bones, and cool off their burns."

"They will be Americans," said he. "They will be proud of their country. They will be glad of their freedom. They will emphasize the vastness of space between the old world and the new, as if America were another star in the immensity. Words will not be able to express their joy. Nothing but gunpowder, gunpowder which destroys tyrants, will express it!"

"Gunpowder doesn't destroy tyrants," said Honor, stopping to pinch out a spark that was burning a hole in her skirt. "It never destroyed one. All the tyrants that have fallen, the real tyrants, have fallen by cold steel. Gunpowder is their weapon, they reign by means of it, they make slaves and keep them with gunpowder!"

"All the same, their thrones are built on it—"

"Then I should think some one would touch a match to the sub-surface—"

And just then the doctor was accosted and taken away to repair some damage caused by an infinitesimal portion of the mighty agent, and Honor went on alone to her flower-people and passed the next hour in a din and clamor of rival beauties, till before the platforms trundled away she was so tired she could have cried.

They were all off at last; and Honor thought she would go home, and hide herself in the dark and the cool, and go to sleep if she could. She didn't want to see one of the things again, and she was sauntering along her way when there was Dr. Basil once more, driving his black horse, though now reining up and alighting beside her.

"Now," he said, "let me take you to see these flower-nations as they pass."

"With that horse?" she exclaimed. "And torpedoes and drums and bugles? He is all afire now!"

"Do you think I am not his master? That I have named him Tzar to have him master me? An idle folly, that, though. There is no danger—pray believe me."

And perhaps the same thing in him that mastered the horse mastered her, for she let him assist her into the phaeton, though her heart misgave her, and when Tzar began dancing at the sound of a distant fife, she was ready to beg to be set down again.

"You see what the dreadful day is!" she exclaimed. "The most frightful day in the calendar! A physician cannot even visit his patients with safety!"

"I don't see it," he said smiling. "My horse feels the music as I do. He is going to commit no more impropriety than I shall. Ah, here it comes. Now remember we are perfectly safe, and enjoy it."

It was true that the horse danced to the music; but with the controlling hand on the reins, he made no attempt at bolting, and Honor fancied that maybe he had an admiring eye for the lovely, dark-eyed girls sur-

rounding Night in her black and spangled tulle, or for the blushing ones with all their blue and gold and silver and rose gauzes about Morning, or for the sea-nymphs, among their shells in their pale-green and foamy white. And then as the tableaux of the various nations came along, she quite forgot horse and fear and torpedoes.

"Here is the Orient," exclaimed Honor. "The Chinese women—"

"Whose feet are made their own jailers," said the doctor.

"And here come the Hindostanee—"

"Escaped to-day from their zenanas."

"Aren't they lovely with their gold-banded snowy muslins—"

"About their swarthy beauty? Yes. One would not think they were prisoners of almost the worst slavery that exists."

"Dear me!" said Honor. "Are you going to see only the moral aspects?"

"Do you want me to see the immoral ones?" he laughed.

"This is Persia now," she said presently. "You wouldn't think Sophie Lee would make up so well as that damsel with a dulcimer, would you?"

"The argent-lidded Persian girl. That is a very pretty hareem scene. Yet if Russia were free, and had her rights as the head of the old Byzantine Empire, there would be no hareems in Ispahan or Constantinople."

"Ah, now you must see Russia!" she exclaimed, as the next platform rolled along. "Tell me, is it right?"

"Furs and sledges and snows and Cossack warriors and barbaric splendor," said Dr. Basil. "Ah, the directors of the scene have omitted a great opportunity. They should have had officials flogging young girls with a knout on the bare back. They should have had some young men on the march, with their manacles biting into the bone—"

"As if there were any truth in such stories!"

He turned and looked at her, the color burning high on his cheeks, and the fire blazing in his blue eyes.

"As if every one didn't know," she continued, "that England is the rival and enemy of Russia, and pays for having these stories told!"

Dr. Basil was controlling himself by an effort that sent the blood spinning to his forehead.

"I suppose you would believe *me*," he said. "I myself have seen it. It was my sister Vera who was flogged till she fainted. Look here." And he pushed back his sleeve and cuff and showed her two deep and singular scars upon his outstretched wrist. "That is the bite of those fetters."

"Oh, Dr. Basil!" cried Honor. "Oh, I didn't know! How can you forgive me!"

"I will tell you all about it some time, if you care to know," said he, gently, as if no storm of memory raged within. "How we escaped, how I translated Vasili to Basil, gave up the idea of contending with the invincible, felt it easier to conquer the powers of sin and suffering than of an imperial government, and am here, and am likely to be here for a long and solitary life, since my sister is dead, and it is unlikely that any woman would wish to share my possibilities. But come!" said Dr. Basil, with the air of waking from a dream; "we are losing the sights,—steady, Tzar, steady! Yes, they are very fine, these lovely girls of the Latin races, Italy, Spain,—but with their flowers and scarfs they do not tell the story that they are the creatures of ignorance and superstition. These ladies of France, these vine-dressers of Champagne,—through what blood they have had to wade to escape oppression! These pretty Irish peasant-girls,—they should not be so plump; they should be starving, exiled; there should be the old grandam turned out of the shieling to sleep in the bog. But to be sure, it is right; one should not obtrude such sights and scenes on pleasure. You must pardon me. I have been guilty of bad taste in doing so."

"Oh!" she cried, sharply, "you never can overlook

it! I ought to have known! I ought to have known what you are in this country for! I ought—"

"What am I in this country for, Miss Honor?"

"For freedom, for safety, for happiness! Oh, Dr. Basil—"

"And now, you see," he said lightly, to break the spell of her confusion, "why nothing but gunpowder can express the feelings of those that know what it is to be born under a despotism when they see the sunlight come sifting through that flag, splendid as a flower, and comprehend what a free country is, to what life and the race are lifted by it, what it is that women may become under it! The country of my fathers is vast," cried Dr. Basil, taking off his hat and letting the wind lift the wet curls, "a vast dungeon! This, my new country, is vast. I rode from sea to sea days and nights across its continental stretches; everywhere freedom, growth, homes, and to all of them the sunshine came through the bright stains of that flag which symbolizes the law and liberty of the stars in heaven themselves! Pardon me!" he said abruptly. "I never speak of these matters to usual people. I have not spoken of myself before since I have been on this side of the world. It is like trifling with sacred things. But to you—" he turned upon her with a radiant smile that changed to amazement when he saw the tears running over her face.

"You must let me get down!" she cried. "Indeed you must. You can never want to see my face again! I must go!"

And before he could put out a detaining hand, she had sprung from the low carriage, darted round the corner of the street, and disappeared down somebody's garden.

It was perhaps well for her that just as Honor reached their own gates a howl greeted her and high heaven, and Teddy, accompanied by a band of brothers, appeared, blistered with pain, his face blown full of black specks by a fuse which would not wait for him to retire before changing its conditions; and her mother

being upstairs with Ben, it took her and the sympathizing cluster of boys a goodly while with warm milk and water and the points of pins and the heads of needles, and frequent successions of fresh howls, to remove the heavier deposits.

"Oh!" cried Ted, looking at himself in the glass, when they felt they could do no more, "I shall be tattooed for life!"

"No," said Honor. "We outgrow almost everything."

"Anybody'd suppose you'd been blown up yourself."

"You will be, when papa comes home and finds you half-peeled," cried Tom.

"Now," said Honor, "you had better go up and lie down beside Ben and keep quiet and cool. And I will bring you up an ice-cream when we have lunch."

"I'm sure I sha'n't!" answered Ted. "That's a nice way to make me forget how my face burns. Come, boys, we're losing lots of fun. It's Independence Day, and I'm going to do just as I please before mother comes down and says no."

And whooping and whistling and snapping torpedoes to right and left, the young savages were on their lawless way again.

Honor went upstairs and sent her mother down to rest under the shadow of the piazza vines; for Ben's scalp-wound was not so serious as to need constant attendance, and she could see to him now. He had just waked from a long sleep, and there was no time for reflection or remembrance in the flood of talk with which he overwhelmed her in recalling and rehearsing his accident. And there was no prospect of thought and solitude after that; for the rest of the children came trooping in and out, and the fireworks, stored in Ben's room, and to be let off that night, had to be handled once more; and then her father came home to lunch, and the bells were ringing again, and in a short interval of silence, broken only by a far-off splutter of crackers and the lonely report of an occasional rifle, she read the paper according to custom. But before she

had finished yesterday's news, a bunch of cannon-crackers sounded alarm under the windows and the whole hubbub had begun again.

"It certainly is a desperate day!" exclaimed Honor, laying down the paper. "All the freedom in the world can't make pleasantness out of noise and confusion, out of staying at home and doing your own work, out of being maimed and bruised yourself, out of fearing maiming and bruising for others!"

"Perhaps we shall outgrow it, as Ted will his freckles," said her father.

"By and by," she said, "when universal peace reigns, there'll be no gunpowder. And then we will keep the day with music,—with music and flowers and love of all mankind in our hearts."

"Very well, Honor," said her father; "you have advanced some way since morning in seeing the virtue of keeping the day at all."

At last Honor had the chance of going to her room and of sitting down with her thoughts. But whatever bad quarter-of-an-hour she spent there, no one would have imagined it who saw her, when the maids had returned and the tea-bell rang, issue refreshed and radiant, in her snowy muslin, the color on her cheek, the light in her dusky eye, the dimpling smile about her lips, her dark braids shining like jacinth-stone. Perhaps, when alone in her room, an after-thought had come to her—not of what she had said to Dr. Basil, but of what he had thought it worth while to say to her, of the way in which he had looked at her in saying it.

He looked at her again in a few moments, although possibly not quite in the same way; for they had hardly sipped their tea, and her father had but just succeeded in partially extinguishing Tom's carefully-arranged bonfire in the yard, when Dr. Basil drove up with Ted bandaged like a mummy, the stick of some one's premature rocket, together with a simultaneous tumble off a fence, having broken his collar-bone, and with him a companion in misfortune in the shape of Florio diffusing the odor of a grove of oranges from the remnants of

the ether that had been administered to him during the trimming of the finger from which an ill-advised pistol had torn off the joint; Ted, still irrepressible, calling on the family to understand in relation to his mishap that it came about without any fault of his own, till he saw his mother sink into the white heap of a fainting-fit, when, feeling the foundations of the universe about to shiver, he began roaring with all his might. And then Dr. Basil and their father helped the boys upstairs, where Florio's mother was at hand, while Honor attended to her own mother.

It was already purple twilight when Dr. Basil descended; and silently from one distance and another great yellow stars were shooting up and emptying showers of jewels on the dark lapis-lazuli of the cloud beyond, whose low growls of thunder were too far away yet to signify. He lingered a moment, as though half-irresolute, and it seemed to Honor as if there were a promise of some brief peace and rest. Suddenly it was broken by a rush of feet overhead and a wild outcry from Ted,—his Roman candles, his Bengal lights, his Catharine-wheels, his fireworks! And Ben was out of bed, and Florio, smarting with pain, was adding his voice to the tumult, and the father's promise that he would set off the fireworks for them himself was drowned in the clamor, and then Ted, in a rage of desperation, was throwing the cherished fireworks through the open window, one after the other, as fast as his sound arm could fling them, the first one falling into the smoldering remains of Tom's bonfire. And then the father and the doctor had rushed out to scatter coals and embers and projectiles, and in another moment fire was running, spurting, sparkling, shooting in every direction, and bells were ringing, and men were shouting, and a fire-engine was racing up the street.

Not an instant too soon. For the sparks that had been sent among the dry roots and stems of the vines beneath the piazza, the light wood of the lattices, the posts, the pillars, the shingled roof, had done their quick work, the curtains blowing through the open

windows had caught, and the inside of the house was in a blaze.

Honor, in a whirl of horror, conscious, even at that moment, that Ted ought to have a whipping, and that he was already suffering enough, and that he and the others must be saved at all hazards, and her mother's beautiful portrait, too, had darted up the stairs. The boys, however, had needed none of her assistance; they had comprehended the situation, and were swarming down one pair of stairs as she sprang up the other.

The open windows had given the fire free draughts; the smoke was rolling in volumes. Honor ran into her father's room to seize the portrait; she could see nothing; all was smoky darkness and suffocation; she turned, but could find no door; she must throw herself on the floor and creep out,—alas, which way! A stifled voice was calling through the smoke with an agonized intonation.

"Honor! Honor!"

"Oh, here I am!" she said. "Here! Here!"

And directly afterward Dr. Basil had her in his arms.

"Thank God, I have you!" he exclaimed. "Thank God, my darling!" and before she realized anything but that it was he, they were out-doors and safe.

For all that, he did not release his grasp of her, and she was clinging still to him, and half the town had seen them. And then the sudden shower of that thunder-cloud was falling blindingly and drenching them to the skin, scattering the crowd and making the work of the engines easy.

"Oh, what a costly day it was!" sighed Honor, when she went into the little hospital of her maimed and wounded, improvised in Mrs. Norcross's, next morning.

"A priceless day!" said Dr. Basil, already there. "A precious day!"

"Humph!" muttered Ted. "I've heard of a man before that gave all his wife's relations to his country. These mattresses," he continued to Florio and Ben, "are first-rate. Now a somersault is done this way. But a hand-spring—"

"Quiet, Theodore," said the doctor. "You must be gentle. You excite the others. You hear me?" his blue eye brightening like steel at Ted's insubordination. "Then obey."

"I guess Honor needn't have wished she'd been born under a despotism," roared Ted, contemptuously. "She's got one now. Say, Honor! Look here,—whisper. What day do you think is the King-pin of all the days of the year?"

And with the blush mantling all the ivory of her forehead, yet smiling up at the eyes that were smiling down at her, Honor whispered back again,

"The Fourth of July!"

Few of the readers of ROMANCE are probably destined to participate in a genuine kangaroo hunt; but here is an exciting description of one, written for this magazine by W. Thomson, who is a veteran Australian gold-digger, and knows his subject thoroughly.

A KANGAROO HUNT.

In the month of January, 1853, four of us—my three mates and I—with a cartload of tools and "grub," were travelling across country from Bendigo to a newly-discovered diggings on Jim Crow Creek. The whole distance did not exceed sixty miles, but as it was now the middle of the Australian summer and the weather was very warm, we made an easy journey of it, not covering more than twenty miles each day.

Early on the second afternoon we came to a large station-house, evidently occupied by a person of some distinction, as, on the parched-up sward before the front door, three handsome horses—two of which bore side-saddles—were held by a nattily-attired English groom.

In those days many of the Australian squatters were cadets of good English families, who had come, or been sent, out to take up tracts of choice lands and engage in cattle and sheep farming. Numbers of these young fellows kept bachelor's hall and "roughed it," in the fullest sense of the term; but others fell in love with the country, built commodious mansions upon their "runs," and went back to the "old country" for wives.

With the wives there sometimes came a sister or two, or, perhaps, a portionless cousin, and thenceforth the lucky benedict lived like a gentleman; while the ladies found no end of enjoyment in sharing his out-door sports. Nor were in-door amusements unprovided for, many of these great, roomy houses being not only elegantly furnished, but supplied with billiard-tables, pianos, harps and other adjuncts of civilization, brought out from England to Melbourne and thence conveyed by

bullock-drags, often over hundreds of miles of bush and plain, to their destination.

The residence we had now stumbled on was clearly not one of the bachelor persuasion. Questioning the groom, we were informed that it was owned by a Mr. Carleton, and that he, his wife and her sister were about to engage in a kangaroo-hunt, one of the shepherds having reported that an old boomer was then ensconced in a patch of scrub only two miles away.

While the man was speaking, another servant rode out from the stables, leading two fine kangaroo dogs, great, noble-looking fellows of a brindled color and closely resembling Scotch stag-hounds. Presently appeared Mr. Carleton and two extremely pretty girls, both about twenty years of age (twin sisters, we were told), who looked so bewitching in their tight-fitting habits and jaunty hats that we homesick diggers, who had not seen a white woman for eighteen months, mentally blessed ourselves on being in such luck.

At least three of our number had followed the hounds on many a hard-run field in Lincoln and Yorkshire, but none of us had ever seen a kangaroo-hunt. Now was our chance! But how could the thing be managed?

Though all young men, and passably good-looking—when clean—we were painfully conscious that our digger's costume and sweaty, dust-begrimed faces rather detracted from our personal charms; that, in fact, we were a decidedly hard-looking lot, and not at all likely to be considered either useful or ornamental accessories.

Yet, notwithstanding our disreputable appearance, I had the effrontery to step up to Mr. Carleton, introduce myself and my comrades, and politely ask if he could in any way arrange to let us join in the novel chase.

Being, as it happened, a thoroughly good fellow, and knowing that many of the diggers were better than they looked, the squatter heartily replied: "Nothing is easier. Here, Dick [to the groom], saddle horses for these young men, and let them come and see the fun."

Dick, quite reconciled to the task by a slyly-administered crown-piece, promptly obeyed, and in ten minutes

we were mounted on native-bred stock horses, animals noted for speed, endurance and sure-footedness.

None of us said so, but the truth was that we were quite as much influenced by a desire to see the young English women ride as by any other motive; a fact which they were not slow to recognize, for I saw them exchange arch glances, as if the admiration of even such uncouth beings was not altogether displeasing.

One reflection somewhat consoled us for our bizarre appearance: we were all good horsemen, and, while not intending to be in the least intrusive, were determined to be well up at the death.

Mr. Carleton now told the man in charge of the dogs to take them by a wide detour round to the further side of the narrow belt of scrub, leave his horse there, enter the thicket and drive the kangaroo out on the open plain in the direction of a range of hills, which we could see in the distance, but by no means slip their leashes until the chase should gain a start of at least four hundred yards.

A few minutes afterwards our host lifted the ladies to their saddles, and the party rode slowly away, followed at a decent interval by ourselves.

On arriving at the hither edge of the scrub, the gentleman took up his position about the centre of the line, and his fair companions ranged themselves on either side of him, but fifty yards away, while we four outsiders stationed ourselves in pairs at each end of the copse, which was about three hundred yards long.

For a full half-hour we all remained absolutely motionless, and not a sound disturbed the silence. Then we heard the huntsman and his dogs thrashing about in the grove, through which little paths had been here and there cut for the convenience of the station people, these wattle-brakes being, in their natural state, impenetrable by anything larger than a bandicoot.

Back and forth, up one narrow trail and down another, went man and hounds, the former yelling at the top of his voice, and the latter giving vent to short, eager yelps as they strained on their leashes. Still

there was no sign of the game. I began to fear that we should have a blank draw, when, suddenly, as they neared my stand, the cry of the dogs changed to a deep, angry roar, and the next moment a gigantic boomer dashed past me and made off with prodigious leaps across the plain.

Propelled only by its strong hind-quarters and legs, and never once touching the ground with its forefeet, each one of the creature's bounds seemed to clear a space of eight or ten yards, and in a few seconds it had gained the conceded limit.

Then, with a resounding halloo, Mr. Carleton ordered the dogs to be slipped, and they sprang away in fierce pursuit, closely followed, at first, by the cheering trio. Our leaders did not close in, but rather spread further apart as they rode, in order to force the chase toward the distant slope. In this lay the only certainty of a kill, for on level or descending ground an old kangaroo will often outspeed the best horses and hounds.

So soon as the station party had gained a fair offing, we four diggers scurried away in their wake. Hundreds of times since that day, I have laughed at the recollection of what a ridiculous figure we must have cut.

With our mud-stained jumpers puffed out by the wind, our battered, nondescript hats, each one flopping wildly at the end of a twine string, and our long, unkempt hair streaming behind, we were a sight for the gods to howl over; and it was well for the security of their seats that the ladies never once looked back.

How those girls did ride! We had seen no such sight since leaving merry England, though here were no hedges, ditches, nor walls to leap. Between us and the hills lay only an open, rolling plain—and in all the wide world no prettier course could have been found.

But now horses and dogs are straining every nerve to overtake the flying game, though without, as yet, gaining an inch; nay, sometimes losing, in places where a slight descent was all in favor of the boomer's peculiar style of locomotion. However, as we, too, extended

our line, the creature was being driven in the required direction and a half-mile would bring it to the hills.

Miss Temple—that, we had learned, was the unmarried lady's name—rode a beautiful chestnut mare, which she sat with the perfect grace born of natural aptitude and supplemented by long practice. Naturally, we young fellows watched her with especial interest, and when we saw that, despite the utmost exertions of her companions, she was drawing gradually ahead, we gave her three lusty cheers, to which she responded by a backward wave of her whip hand.

Then, with a ringing laugh and a mischievous glance at her tall brother-in-law, the lovely girl sat down in her saddle and rode—rode like a goddess, if goddesses ever do ride—and actually began to gain on the dogs, now running like greyhounds.

The chestnut mare was at this time not more than a quarter-of-a-mile distant from the hilly range, which the distressed quarry had now, but alas! with greatly shortened leaps, begun to ascend. The run had extended over a stretch of fully five miles, and the bottom of our tough stock horses was beginning to tell. Indeed, by judicious riding, we had nearly overhauled the half-blown thoroughbreds of Mr. and Mrs. Carleton; but Miss Temple was quite one hundred yards in advance of us all and every instant increasing her lead.

Yet we were close enough to witness the *finale*, which came much sooner than we had expected, for so greatly is an uphill movement detrimental to the speed of a kangaroo, owing to its peculiar build, that the old male we were chasing had not left the plain two hundred yards behind when the dogs overtook him.

We strangers, who then knew nothing of a kangaroo's nature, except that it is a notoriously timid animal, looked to see the fierce hounds pull down their game in a moment. What then was our surprise, when, just as the foremost dog sprang at its throat, the boomer turned at bay, seized the rash assailant in his forepaws, steadied himself by dropping his tail to the ground, and, with three or four lightning-like strokes

of his terrible hind-claws, fairly ripped open and partially disemboweled the poor brute!

But the giant marsupial purchased vengeance at the cost of his own life, for while he was intent only upon rending his grappled foe, the second hound dashed up, fastened his sharp fangs in the side of the quarry's neck, gave a savage shake or two, severing the jugular vein, and in less time than it has taken to tell of it the overmatched beast lay dead on the ground.

Miss Temple rode up at this moment, but her innocent triumph at being first was quenched in grief for the fate of the mangled dog, and when the rest of us reached the spot, she had already dismounted and was holding his head on her lap, while her tears fell like rain over his upturned face and sadly-appealing eyes.

"Dear old Hector!" she sobbed, as the faithful creature licked her caressing hand. "Our sport has been dearly bought!"

"Don't cry, Mary," said Mr. Carleton, examining the dog's wounds; "no fatal rupture has occurred. I think the poor fellow can be saved."

Now, most happily, we were able to make a slight return for the courtesies shown us. One of our number, "Jack" Urquhart, was a graduate of a London hospital, and always carried about with him a few simple surgical appliances. Very skilfully he replaced his dumb patient's protuding intestines and stitched up the ragged wounds, while Miss Temple, now smiling through her tears, rewarded him by softly-murmured thanks.

Then we diggers took off our stout jumpers, formed the four into a stretcher and, two of us taking turn and turn about, bore the injured animal all the way home as carefully as if he had been a disabled comrade.

The consequences were a little inconvenient to ourselves, as the ladies joined Mr. Carleton in insisting that we should stay to their six o'clock dinner. Hence we were obliged, not only to undertake a thorough scrubbing, but also to ferret out from the cart such remnants of decent clothing as we still possessed and make ourselves in some sort presentable.

That pleasant evening, and the unwonted luxury of sleeping once more in civilized beds, amply repaid us for all, however, and made us almost regret that we had not become aristocratic squatters, instead of rude gold-diggers. Next morning, after breakfasting with our new-found friends, we were preparing to resume our journey when Urquhart asked: "Boys, did any of you happen to notice that narrow gully in the hills just beyond where the kangaroo was killed?"

"I did, for one," replied Fred Ross, "and I thought it looked very like some of those little off-shoots of Eagle Hawk gully, at Bendigo. The slope at its head is covered with broken quartz in just the same way."

"Well, mates," continued Jack, "let's prospect that gully before we go any further. I think we'll find the 'color,' anyhow."

As time was of no particular account with us, we all agreed to Jack's proposition, but first, as a matter of mere civility, told Mr. Carleton of our intentions.

"Go right ahead. It's all government land here. There's nothing to stop you," that gentleman cheerily said. "I hope you'll make a find, though I rather doubt it."

But, after sinking several "shysters," we did "make a find," on a little ledge at the extreme upper end of the gully, and took from it, in a single day, one hundred and twenty-two ounces of coarse gold!

Then we spent a week in further prospecting, but found no "pay dirt" worth washing. That one ledge, evidently a ripple in an ancient river which had ceased to flow countless ages before, was the only "placer" we found, though years afterward, as I have since learned, "Kangaroo Gulch," so christened by us, turned out considerable quantities of the precious metal.

Rashly supposing that a further stay at Carleton Station would be useless, we overruled Jack Urquhart's unreasonable wish to remain and went on to Jim Crow Creek. This we soon found to be only a "Poor Man's Diggings," as indeed it was named. So, after working for a while, and averaging no more than half-an-ounce

per day to each man, we dissolved our partnership and scattered in various directions.

One day, about eighteen months afterward, I was strolling along Little Bourke street, in Melbourne, when I saw on the door of a handsome residence a quite stylish plate, bearing the legend: "John Urquhart, M. D." Curious to ascertain whether this might possibly refer to my old chum, I ran up the steps and rang the bell. The door was opened by a much-be-buttoned youth, who showed me into the doctor's study.

Presently there entered a faultlessly-dressed gentleman. Mutually searching looks were exchanged, and the next instant I found myself in the bear-like grasp of Jack himself!

When our first uproarious greetings had toned down to half conventional shape, I exclaimed:

"Why, Jack, old man, you're in clover here! Not *married*, are you?"

"Six months ago," he laughingly replied; "come along and see my wife."

Passing through a broad hall, we entered a cozy little room, where sat a strikingly beautiful young woman. Surely I had seen that face before! but when and where? I had no time to solve the problem before the lady rose, with a look as puzzled as my own, and Jack hilariously shouted: "Mary, here's an old friend—one of the famous four who rode in that kangaroo hunt. Don't look much as he did then, does he? This is my wife, old fellow—once Miss Temple, of Carleton Station. Do you remember how she rode that day? I'll show you the chestnut mare directly."

Here was a surprise indeed! Mrs. Urquhart was charmingly gracious, and sly old Jack, now enjoying a big city practice, never sat down until he had sent his man to the hotel for my traps. The whole story was a romance, too long to be told here, but was delightfully gone over that evening by my fair hostess as she sat with her hand resting upon the head of old Hector, apparently as strong and sound as when I first saw him.

In the following characteristic story by Mary E. Wilkins, appear the vivid, walking, peaking people; the singularly true and elevated sentiment; the irresistible, unobtrusive humor; and the blending of realism with the most exquisite idealism, which have placed the works of this author already among the classics.

JULIZA.

THERE was a sewing-circle and sociable in the little Baptist church in Stony Brook. The sewing-circle had begun early in the afternoon, the older women had come with their best white aprons trimmed with knitted lace, and their needle-books and thimbles in their pockets, and had sewed busily, gathered around the great wood stove in the vestry. It was a cold day. They sewed until dusk; then they lighted the lamps, warmed the tea and coffee which had been brought ready made in great cans, and set out the buttered biscuits, the cold meat, and the cake and pies. The young people began to flock in.

Only the young girls, with their carefully-frizzed tufts of front hair and their shining braids in the back, gathered around the stove; the young men stood aloof in stiff, amiable groups near the door. They made way for Juliza Peck when she entered, and she walked through them calmly, looking neither to the right nor left, and greeting none of them. Greeting young men in the aggregate at a sociable was not in the social code of the girls of Stony Brook. Juliza was a heavily-built girl, with a back as broad as a matron's. She wore her best blue cashmere dress with rows of velvet ribbon over the bust, her mother's best brooch, which was black, with a beautiful little bunch of pearl grapes on it, and new shoes, which creaked as she advanced.

There wa a certain importance about her entrance; the young girls all stared around at her and whispered; and several women in flaring white aprons spoke to her and asked where her mother was. Juliza replied with

dignity that her mother had a cold, and had not thought it prudent to come out.

"I s'pose you're all prepared," said one woman, whose thin crimped hair was trained carefully over thin flushed cheeks. She held a pile of plates under her arm; the plates rattled, her starched apron crackled, and her black silk hissed as she spoke with nervous haste and pleasantry.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Juliza.

"You mustn't make us all cry, the way you did before," said the woman. Juliza laughed. When she approached the group of girls by the stove, they all nodded stiffly, and she returned it.

"Goin' to speak to-night?" asked one of the girls, after a little.

"Yes," said Juliza.

"Don't you dread it?" asked another.

"Not a mite."

"I don't see how you do it."

The girls all stared at Juliza as she stood in their midst, but she did not seem to realize it. Her dark-brown hair curled naturally, and she had brushed it back crinkling from her fresh-colored face with its rounding profile, and had tied it in a bunch at the back. She warmed her hands, then she sat down; the girls did not talk to her any more. She was not in reality, although near their ages, a companion of theirs. She was an only child. She had lived alone with her parents, had never been to school nor associated with girls of her own age. The result was not shyness when she was brought in contact with them,—she had too steady a nervous system for that,—but a demeanor like that of a woman of fifty. She felt years away from the other girls, and they also felt it.

As she sat waiting, she looked calmly over at the group of young men near the door. Frank Williams had come; she could see his shining blonde head above the others. He was quite tall, and his shoulders sloped boyishly in his best coat. She looked steadily at him, and presently he turned his eyes toward her. He did

not speak, nor did she; but she could see a wave of red flash over his long throat and his smooth face. Juliza did not blush at all.

When they gathered around the supper-table amid an embarrassed hush, Juliza found herself far away from the other young people, next the minister. When the blessing had been asked by the minister towering over her, she looked around to see where Frank Williams was. He was sitting between two young girls at the lower end of the table. Juliza sat back and ate a hearty supper. After supper, when the table was cleared away, the entertainment began. There was playing on the parlor organ and singing; then Juliza Peck spoke.

"There will now be a recitation by Miss Juliza Peck," announced the minister; and Juliza arose and went unflinchingly in her creaking shoes to the platform, took her position, bowed, and lifted up her voice. Her voice was heavy and low-pitched, and she spoke with a solemn intonation; now and then she gestured deliberately. She spoke a long poem describing an heroic deed and a tragic death; people had their handkerchiefs to their faces. When she finished and stepped down from the platform, there was a murmur of admiration all over the vestry; clapping was not allowed in the church. "Beautiful!" the women whispered to one another, and nodded.

There was more music, then Juliza spoke again,—she spoke three times in all,—and the subdued enthusiasm grew stronger.

Juliza Peck's speaking was held in great repute in Stony Brook. It was quite generally believed that very few of the people who go around the country speaking for money in town-halls could speak as well as she. Women had talked to Juliza's mother about it, but Mrs. Peck had shaken her head. "There ain't any need of Juliza's doing any such thing," said she, with dignity. "I'm willin' she should speak to accommodate as she does here in town, but I ain't willin' to have her go round speakin' in public. It ain't a woman's place. An' Juliza's got enough; she don't need to."

Juliza Peck was considered quite an heiress. There had been two aunts on her father's side who had been left widows with small properties; Juliza had been named for both of them by a judicious combination of Julia and Eliza, and had inherited their money. She had quite a little sum in a savings-bank, and she owned a house in a neighboring village.

The sociable ended about ten o'clock,—there had been a little social time after the entertainment,—then people began to go home.

Juliza pinned her mother's plaid long-shawl firmly and comfortably over her shoulders and tied on her blue hood. The young men stood thickly around the outer door. Now and then, when a girl passed out, a young man left the group softly and slyly, and followed her. When Juliza Peck appeared, Frank Williams shrank back; several of the young men tried to push him forward, laughing, but he stood his ground. Juliza paused in the doorway, and stood looking back at him calmly, as if waiting. The scuffle among the young men ceased; Frank Williams stepped forward, and he and Juliza went out of the door.

An icy north wind came full in their faces when they turned into the road. The snow was drifted at the sides, so they walked in the middle in the sleigh-ruts. Frank did not offer his arm to Juliza, and she plodded solidly along at his side, with her mittened hands warmly folded under her shawl. "It's an awful cold night, ain't it?" said she, presently. Frank grunted assent; his coat-collar was pulled up over his ears, and his hands were in his pockets. Juliza kept looking at his dusky, forbidding figure. "What's the matter?" said she.

"Nothin's the matter; why?"

"Don't you feel well?"

"Feel well enough."

"What makes you act so, then?"

"Act how? I didn't know I was actin' any way uncommon. I'm cold, and I want to get home."

"Yes, it is dreadful cold," said Juliza, soberly. "Your overcoat's thick, ain't it?"

"Thick? I've been wearin' it all winter."

"Look here, Frank; I've got on this scarf, an' I don't need it with this shawl; I wish you'd put it round your throat."

"No, I don't need it; my coat-collar's warm enough."

"Now, do."

"I don't need it."

Frank swung on so rapidly that Juliza panted keeping up with him. It was cloudy, but there was a full moon behind the clouds, so there was a soft, pale light over all the snowy landscape. It was a lonely road, and they had a mile and a half to go. Here and there, back in the fields, twinkled a light in some house-window.

"Frank?" said Juliza.

"What say?"

"What makes you act so?"

"Act how? Well, if you want to know, mother's miserable. She's miserable the whole time. I hadn't ought to have come off an' left her to-night; but she made me. She ain't fit to do a thing about the house, an' she won't have a hired girl. I don't believe mother'll ever be any better; she'll always be feeble; she's just the way her mother was for years. I'm tryin' to do the cookin', but I don't make out much."

Juliza took out a hand from under her shawl and caught hold of Frank's arm. "Don't walk quite so fast," said she. "Look here!"

"What say?"

The young man's tone was softer than before, and he slackened his pace. Juliza looked up in his shadowy face. She had to speak quite loudly to be heard in the strong wind. "There ain't but one thing to do," said she, "I'll come over there whenever you want me."

"You!"

"Yes; there ain't any need of me at home. Of course they'll miss me, but mother's real strong and well. I can come any time next week, if you say so. I haven't much to do to get ready. I've got clothes enough. I never thought I'd want to lay in a great

stock when I was married. Anyway, I always thought it was foolish."

"Juliza, you don't mean—"

"I mean I'll get married to you right away, and come over to your house. That'll settle it. I'm a good cook and a good housekeeper: mother says I am." The young man fairly gasped; he trembled violently.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Juliza; "are you so cold as all that?"

"No; it ain't that. Juliza, you're awful good. I know you can cook splendid. I—don't know what to say. Oh, dear! I ain't—thought about gettin' married yet awhile. That's the whole of it, Juliza. I'm just as much obliged to you."

Juliza stopped short. "You don't mean you don't want me to marry you, Frank Williams," she said.

"Why, see here, Juliza—"

"You don't mean it."

"Why, Juliza, you know if—I was goin' to marry anybody,—I've always liked you first-rate."

"I hadn't a thought but you wanted me to," said she, and began walking on. "I don't see what you'll do if I don't marry you."

"Oh, we'll worry along somehow. We'd better walk fast, Juliza, or we'll catch cold." He pulled Juliza's firm hand and arm closer against his.

"I ain't cold," said she, "it's you; you've been shiverin' ever since we started. I'm glad we're most home. There's the light in the sittin'-room window."

Juliza's house came first on the brow of a long hill; the Williams house was close to it; and there was no other dwelling in sight either way. Frank and Juliza went to her side-door; the front-yard was blocked in with snow. Frank released Juliza's hand from his arm.

"You mustn't think I shall say anything about this to-night," he said in a hesitating voice; "I shan't ever speak of it."

"I don't care if you do," returned Juliza; "I haven't done anything I'm ashamed of; if anybody has, it's

you. I supposed you took it for granted I was goin' to marry you, an' I don't think you show much common-sense about it. I don't believe anybody else would think so, either."

"There's something to be considered besides common-sense, sometimes," said Frank, feebly. They were a little sheltered in the south yard from the wind. Juliza's cat came mewing loudly around her feet.

"I begin to think there is," said Juliza. "Well, it's for you to say, of course. I ain't goin' in anywhere where I ain't wanted; but I must say I'm surprised. Good-night, Frank."

"Good-night, Juliza." Juliza opened the door and let in the cat, then she stood looking for a moment after Frank's retreating figure, and listening to the sound of his footsteps crunching the snow.

"Juliza! that you?" called a voice from the sitting-room; and she went in hastily and closed the door. When she entered the sitting-room, she found her mother there alone, in the warm, light atmosphere full of the odor of green flowering-plants; the windows were all set with tiers of them. There was a curious majesty about Mrs. Peck's large figure and long face; she wore her black hair in punctilious waterwaves around her temples; she sat in her rocking-chair as if it were a throne; and her black cashmere skirt fell over her knees in stately folds. "You are pretty late, ain't you?" said she; and her voice was deep, with solemn inflections like Juliza's.

"I don't know. The entertainment was pretty long."

"Did they act as if they liked your pieces?"

"Yes, I thought they did."

"Did anybody ask after me?"

"Yes, a lot did."

"What did you tell 'em?"

"I told 'em you had a cold, an' didn't think it was quite prudent to go out." Juliza's voice took on exactly the tone with which she had replied to the inquiring women. She had taken off her shawl and hood, and was standing over the stove. Her face was all a deep

pink glow from the cold wind. "Mother," said she, suddenly, "what do you suppose the reason is that Frank don't want me to marry him?"

"Juliza Peck, what do you mean?"

"What I say. What do you suppose the reason is he don't want me to marry him?"

"How do you know he don't?—what are you talking about?"

"He said he didn't, just now."

"How came he to?"

"He was tellin' me how miserable his mother was, an' what a hard time he had gettin' along, an' I said I was willin' to marry him, an' go over there, whenever he said. I knew you could get along without me."

"Juliza Peck, you didn't ask Frank Williams to marry you?"

"No, I didn't ask him; I told him I would."

"Do you know what you've done?"

"What?"

"What? You've made yourself a laughin' stock all over Stony Brook."

"I don't see why I have, I'm sure."

"Don't you know girls don't tell young men they'll marry 'em, unless they're asked."

"I don't see why they don't."

"You needn't tell me you didn't know better than that."

Juliza turned about, and fronted her mother calmly.

"No I didn't, an' I don't," said she. "I don't see why it's any worse for a girl to speak than 'tis for a man. I always supposed he wanted me to marry him, I've never wanted to marry anybody else, an' I knew his mother was so miserable, and I'd have so much work to do if I went there, that he'd think it was kind of mean to speak of it himself. I don't see a single thing to be ashamed of."

"He'll tell of it all over town."

"No, he won't, he said he wouldn't; an' I told him he could if he wanted to. I don't see what I've done

to be laughed at. I don't think he's shown common-sense."

Mrs. Peck looked at Juliza with angry eyes, black and full under her water-waves. Juliza looked at her and never flinched.

"I should have thought your own modesty would have taught you."

"Modesty," returned Juliza in bewildered contempt, as if she didn't know what the word meant. "I think it's you that's immodest, mother. I'm too modest to see how I wasn't."

"Well, you've done it, that's all I've got to say," said her mother rising, "now you'd better go to bed. I've been sittin' up here waitin' for you this hour; your father went to bed at nine o'clock. I feel like givin' up, myself; a girl with all your advantages, with money at interest, an' speakin' the way you can, havin' a young man tell you right to your face he didn't want to marry you. I should like to know what he thinks he is—the Williamses warn't never much; they've picked up a little late years, but I remember the time when they was jest as poor an' low as they could be. Your father an' me look a good deal higher than he for you; I can tell him that."

"He's high enough for me," said Juliza, lighting her lamp.

"I'm ashamed of you," said her mother, fiercely.

"I ain't goin' to run him down because he don't want to marry me." Then Juliza went upstairs to her own room, slowly and ponderously.

The next morning she awoke with a firm resolution in her mind. "I'm goin' to know about this thing," she muttered to herself, and bore down heavily with her wet brush upon her crinkly front hair, then tied her bunch of curls with a jerk.

Her mother treated her with cold stiffness when she appeared downstairs; her father, who was an old man and very silent, ate his breakfast and then went away with a load of wood.

"Be sure you get back in good season," his wife

called after him, standing in the door, "I want you to take me down to the village after dinner." The old man made no reply, but it was certain that he heard and would be home in good season. He never dreamed of disobeying his imperious wife, but covered his docility with taciturnity, which gave him a show of masculine dignity.

After the house-work was done, Mrs. Peck called Juliza into the sitting-room and drilled her in a new selection. She stood majestic in her morning calico, which swept about her like the robe of a tragedy queen, repeating the poem line by line, and Juliza followed her, imitating the modulations of her voice. Her gestures she could not well imitate; there was something fairly impressive about the backward fling of her mother's head and the sweep of her great arms; her black eyes were full of energetic fire. "You plank your arm up an' down like a pump-handle," said she; "your arm ain't put in with a hinge, it's put in with your feelin's, when you're speakin'." Juliza worked her arm with patient vigor, but she could not equal her mother. "I spose it's because you're built so solid," said Mrs. Peck. "Well, you speak it pretty well. I thought it would be a good piece for the next sociable, if you don't get married."

Juliza answered not a word, she did not flush or look confused. She sat down and sewed silently on a dress she was making. She had a certain dignity of taciturnity like her father at times.

After dinner, her father put the horse in the sleigh, and her mother bundled herself in cloaks and shawls, until she looked like a massive pillar standing in the door-way. "Look out for the fire, Juliza," said she, "an' you'd better study that last piece over some."

"Yes'm," said Juliza.

After her mother had gone, she sat by the sitting-room window and watched the snowy road stretching away in cold blue furrows where the sleighs had passed. Her hands lay idle in her lap. She sat there an hour, then she arose and got her shawl and hood. When she

was tying on her hood at the sitting-room glass, she saw Frank Williams going by. She rushed to the window, and pounded on it and beckoned.

He looked up, smiled and nodded confusedly, and was passing on. Juliza had to reach between the flower-pots, and he could scarcely see her face behind them. She hurried to the front-door, unlocked it, and pulled it open with a desperate jerk, for the snow had frozen on the sill. "Frank," she called out, "Frank Williams, come in here a minute, I want to see you."

The young man hesitated.

"Is it anything particular?" he called back.

"Yes, 'tis. I've got to see you a minute."

"I've left mother all alone, an' I've got to go down to the store."

"I won't keep you but just a minute."

Frank turned up the path leading to the side-door; Juliza kicked off the ridge of snow on the sill, pushed to the door, and went around to let him in.

"I can't stay but a minute," he said, and he looked sulky.

"I won't keep you but just a minute." Juliza led the way into the warm sitting-room; she did not ask him to sit down, they stood confronting each other. "Father and mother have gone to the village," said she. "I've called you in because I wanted to ask you something, and it was a good chance."

Frank was blushing; he looked down at his snowy boots, saw the snow melting on the carpet, and thought fiercely to himself that he did not care if it was spoiled. He tried to smile. "Well," he muttered.

"Now, Frank, I want to ask you something, an' I want you to tell me the truth. I think you owe it to me. We've known each other ever since we were children; you're all the one I've ever known outside this house. You know mother never let me go to school, nor play with other girls. You lived next door, you know, an' she couldn't help it."

"What is it you want to know, Juliza?" said Frank in a constrained voice.

"I want to know why you don't want to marry me?"

Frank threw up his chin with a jerk. "See here, Juliza Peck," he cried, "you may not know it, but you're doin' a dreadful thing. How do you suppose I can answer you a question like that if I'm a man. You know I like you well enough; I always have, but—oh dear, I don't know what to say."

"Is there anybody else you like better?" Juliza asked calmly.

Frank gave a sudden start and looked at her. "I don't know as there is."

"Who is it?"

"I tell you, I don't know as there's anybody."

"Now, Frank Williams, you've got to tell me. You owe it to me. Is it any girl here in Stony Brook?"

"No, it isn't."

Juliza looked at him reflectively. "I know who 'tis," said she.

"No, you don't."

"Yes, I do, an' I'll tell you, too. It's that Lily Emmons that came here once with your cousin Jenny."

Frank blushed deeper; he cast a glance at Juliza that was almost piteous.

"I knew 'twas," said she, "you can't cheat me. She came here last summer; I remember her. She was real pretty; I never saw such pink cheeks as she had, an' she had a pink dress with cambric edging on it."

"It's no use talkin' about it," said Frank.

"Yes, there is, too. See here, Frank, have you asked her?"

"Asked her? I haven't seen her since she was here."

"Haven't you written to her?"

"No. Jenny's written to me about her, that's all."

"An' you've sent a word to her sometimes, haven't you?"

"Well, I don't know, I may have, once or twice."

"Frank, you sit down here a minute,—you've got to tell me about this." Juliza pulled forward a rocking-chair, and Frank settled into it. Juliza sat opposite.

"Now," said she, "you tell me the whole story. Do you think she likes you?"

Frank looked at her like a bashful child, blushing, and half-smiling.

"Tell me all about it," said she.

"I've never told a livin' soul, Juliza."

"That's all the more reason why you should. Did anything happen while she was here?

"You know she wasn't here but two weeks with Jenny," began Frank, hesitatingly, "I suppose you wouldn't think anything could happen in that length of time, but Jenny was with mother, an' she an' I were thrown together a good deal, an' we got acquainted fast. It seemed to me I never got acquainted with anybody so fast; an'—well, it was the day before she went away, we walked down in the orchard, an' I don't know how it happened, but we were standin' there under the trees, an' she was looking up at me, an'—well, any way, I kissed her; an' just then Jenny came runnin' down through the field."

"Did she act mad?"

"No, I don't think she did. I was afraid she was, afterward, but she didn't act so."

"Of course she liked you, then."

"See here, Juliza—should you, if you'd been in her place, that is, if any one had acted so by you? You're another girl, an' you ought to know."

"Yes, I should."

"May be she did like me a little then. I don't see how she could. Oh Juliza, wasn't she pretty?"

"She's prettier than any girl in Stony Brook."

"I guess she is." Frank's face was full of a tender radiance, his blue eyes looked up into Juliza's face with the love that belonged to the other girl. Juliza was now standing over him. "See here," said she, "why don't you write to her, or go to see her, or something?"

"Jenny asked me to come over to Hillbrook, an' visit. She hinted somebody else would be glad to see me, she guessed; but I can't go."

"Why not?"

"I can't leave mother."

"You could write to that girl," said Juliza, after a reflective pause.

"No, it's no use: I can't. I tell you what 'tis, Juliza, I have written fifty letters, an' torn 'em up. I don't even know how to begin 'em."

"I should say, 'Dear Friend,'" said Juliza.

"Should you? Well, I didn't know. You see I wasn't sure she was in earnest that time in the apple-orchard. I was afraid of writin' as if she was, and afraid of writin' as if she wasn't. Then I tried to write news, but there wasn't any. I had to give it up."

"I could help you write a letter, I suppose," said Juliza, "but I think you had better see her. I'll tell you what I'll do. You get ready an' go to Hillbrook, an'—I'll stay with your mother while you're gone."

"Oh Juliza, you don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do, too."

"Oh! I tell you what 'tis, Juliza, I never saw a girl as good as you are. I don't believe *she* is; at least, I don't believe she's any better."

"I just as lives as not," said Juliza, "it ain't anything, you get ready an' go, an' I'll come over any day. When do you want to go?"

Frank hesitated. "It's Thursday, now," said he, "when do you think I'd better go?"

"Why don't you go to-morrow, an' stay a week?"

"Had you just as soon come to-morrow?"

"I can come to-morrow just as well as any day."

"Well, then," said Frank, getting up, "I'll go home an' tell mother. I guess she'll be willin'. She's always thought everything of you, Juliza."

"How is she to-day?"

"She's miserable."

"Don't she take any medicine?"

"Yes, she takes the doctor's medicine, an' then she has her own little doses. I've just been makin' her some anise-seed tea."

When Frank went, Juliza resumed her sewing and waited for her father and mother to return. It was

dusk, and she had lighted the lamp before they drove into the yard. Juliza opened the door, and her mother came in, panting, in a swirl of cold air. She had her arms full of bundles, and she put them down on the lounge with emphasis.

"It's a terrible raw wind," said she, "I'm lucky if I don't get more cold." Suddenly she stood still, and sniffed; her thick green veil moulded itself to her large features.

"What's that I smell?" said she, "anise?" Juliza made no reply.

"Yes, 'tis anise," repeated her mother. "You can't cheat me. Frank Williams has been in here. Mis' Williams is always havin' anise tea, an' their clothes are always scented with it." Suddenly Mrs. Peck made a step forward, slipped up her veil, and peered down at the carpet. "What's that great spot?" she cried out. "He's tracked in snow, an' you know water spots this carpet. I should think you were crazy, Juliza Peck. Why didn't you put a mat under his feet?"

"I didn't think."

"I should think you'd better think. There's that great spot on the carpet. What did he come in here for, anyway?"

Juliza stood looking at the spot. "He wants to go away a few days, but he can't leave his mother. I—told him I'd go over there an' stay with her, so he could go."

"You did!" Juliza looked at the spot. "I guess you won't go a step, not if I know it."

Juliza had always been frank and artless, even to bluntness and stupidity. Now she suddenly displayed art which would have done credit to a diplomat. "He's goin' to his cousin Jenny's," said she, "but he's really goin' to see that Emmons girl who was here last summer. If—I go over there to stay while he's gone, he won't think, an' nobody else will think, I want him."

Her mother looked at her sharply. She had taken off her veil and bonnet, the stiff water-waves were unruffled, her cheeks were a purplish-red with the cold

wind. "If I ever hear anybody hint you wanted him, they'll get a piece of my mind," said she.

The next morning Juliza went over to the Williams house; her mother had made no further opposition; she even helped her off, grudgingly. "Don't you try to work ter hard now," said she, "you make Frank draw you some water, an' get in a stock of wood before he goes. I'll run over this afternoon, an' see how you're gettin' along."

When Juliza entered the sitting-room of the other house, she found Mrs. Williams sitting at the window in her rocking-chair. She was a little woman, doubled up limply in pillows, like a baby. Her small, gently querulous face was tear-stained, and she looked up pitifully at Juliza. "He's out in the kitchen, shavin'," said she. "He's goin' on the ten o'clock train."

"You an' I will get along first-rate," said Juliza.

Mrs. Williams turned her face toward the window, and wept feebly.

"Now, you mustn't feel so," said Juliza, "you'll make it dreadful hard for him. He won't take any comfort at all, if you do so."

"I don't know—anything about that—girl," sobbed Mrs. Williams.

"She's a real pretty girl, an' Jenny knows her."

"I don't want him bringin' home a strange girl, here, and me not able to lift a finger. I don't see why he couldn't have married you, if he'd wanted to married anybody."

"Now, Mis' Williams," said Juliza, "you mustn't do so; it ain't right. You want him to be happy, don't you?"

"Course I do. I want him to be happy more'n anything in the world; he knows I do."

"Then you mustn't take on so. Have you had any breakfast, Mis' Williams?"

"Yes, all I want."

Juliza had laid her shawl and hood away in a closet. She began to straighten the furniture in the sitting-room and to set things to rights. Presently Frank came

in, all ready, his black valise in his hand. He looked sharply at his mother, then he set the valise down, heavily.

"Look here, mother," said he, "I ain't goin' a step if you feel this way. I think more of you than I do of anybody else, an' I ain't goin' to have you plagued."

Mrs. Williams began weeping again. Juliza caught up the valise, took hold of Frank's arm, and pulled him out into the kitchen. "Now, you go right along," said she, "an' don't stop to argue. She's all right. She's only nervous. I'll look out for her."

"Oh, Juliza, do you really think I'd ought to go?"

"Of course, I do. Don't you make any more words about it. Go in there, and kiss her, an' say good-bye, and don't make any fuss. Here, give me your hat while you go. It needs brushin'."

When Frank was fairly started, Juliza stood at the kitchen-window, and watched him down the road with steady eyes; then she went back to Mrs. Williams in the sitting-room. She had no easy task during the next week. The invalid's feeble nerves were all at loose ends and quivering over her son's absence. Then, too, there was much to be done to put the house in order. Frank's housekeeping was eccentric; it seemed to Juliza that everything was where it did not belong. Mrs. Peck came over and helped her several times, but she had a cold, and there was much stormy weather. Juliza had little leisure to grieve, if she had wished to, even at night. She slept in a room out of Mrs. Williams's, kept a lamp burning, and was ready to spring up at her slightest call.

On the day Frank returned there was a heavy snow-storm; it was dark at half-past four, and Mrs. Williams had gone to bed. Juliza was out in the kitchen; she had been baking biscuits, and had just lifted the pan out of the oven, when Frank opened the door. The minute she looked at him she knew. His face was all wet and rosy like a child's, from the snow and the wind. He was trying not to smile, or rather laugh out with joy, but his whole face shone.

"Well; so you've got home?" said Juliza.

"Yes. How's mother?"

"She's pretty comfortable. She's just gone to bed."

Frank went up to the stove and stood over it. "You don't ask me how I got along, Juliza?" said he.

"How did you?"

"Well, I guess it'll be all right." Suddenly Frank flung up one arm on the shelf, and rested his head on it. "Oh!" he cried out, almost sobbing like a child, "I'm so happy! She's liked me all along, ever since she was here. I don't know what I've done to deserve it. I can't believe it. Oh, I'm so happy it seems as if I couldn't live."

"I'm real glad for you," said Juliza. She was quite pale, but her voice was steady. She went into the pantry and brought out some cookies in a plate. The table was all set for Frank's supper. "You'd better go in an' just speak to your mother," she said; "she must have heard you come in, an' she'd be nervous waiting."

"Well, I'll go in," said Frank, raising his head and showing his radiant, quivering face. "Oh, Juliza! you've been the best friend to me I ever had in my life, comin' over here. I'll never forget it."

Juliza smiled. "I'd just as lives as not," said she. "Go in kind of quiet." The minute the sitting-room door had closed after Frank, Juliza caught her shawl and hood from a peg, put them on, opened the door softly, and sped out. Then she tramped sturdily down the snowy road toward the lights of her own home.

Frank was married some six weeks afterward at his bride's home in Hillbrook. The newly-wedded couple, with quite a large company of relations, came over to Stony Brook for a wedding party at the bridegroom's house. Juliza had a new black silk to wear, and her mother had made her take some of her money and buy a garnet breastpin. "You might just as well have things," she said, with a defiant air. She thought to herself that Juliza looked better than the bride, but the bride was beautiful. She stood smiling and blushing beside Frank, in her pink gown and her veil. Juliza

had pinned on the veil; the bride had brought it over from Hillbrook in a box.

The evening was nearly over when Mrs. Peck came up to Juliza and took hold of her arm forcibly—"They want you to speak a piece," she whispered.

"Oh, mother! I don't believe I can to-night."

"Yes, you can, too; that last one. They all want you to. Mis' Williams does, an' Frank, an' *she* does, too. There! the minister's goin' to tell 'em."

There was a sudden hush. Then the minister spoke: "We will now listen to a recitation by Miss Juliza Peck," said he. "She has kindly consented to grace still further this happy occasion."

There was a soft clapping of hands. Juliza stood forward and bowed. She was exactly in front of the wedded pair. She began to speak, and she spoke as she had never done before. Her gestures were full of fire; every line of her form and face seemed to conform to the exigencies of the situation; her voice rang out with a truth that was deeper than her own personality. Everybody listened. The bridal couple were forgotten. When Juliza finished, everybody crowded around her; her mother stood aloof, proudly smiling. The beautiful bride told her she had never heard anybody speak so well. Frank stood close to her, and as soon as the others drew off a little, he leaned over her and whispered.

"I want to tell you, Juliza," he said, "how much we thank you for everything you've done. I've told Lily about it, an' we both feel as if it's all due to you."

"I haven't done much."

"Yes, you have, an' there's another thing. Juliza, I want you to forgive me for—that night. I haven't told a soul, not even Lily, an' I never shall. I know you just meant to be kind, that was all."

Juliza smiled. She had the same proud lift to her head that she had had when reciting. "It's all right," said she, "don't you worry."

This pathetic little story of the meeting of two old shipmates has been written for ROMANCE by James Harvey Smith.

OLD SHIPMATES.

It does not seem natural for an old warrior to die outside the scene of actual strife. Nelson in Hardy's arms, Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham and Lyon at the battle of Wilson's Creek fulfilled their destiny; but to die in bed, after escaping the storm of shot and shell, the perils of flood and field, that seems puerile.

Yet there was nothing puerile about the Admiral as he lay dying on the great canopied bed in that sunny room. The outline of his form could be seen underneath the coverings; the withered hands lay on the counterpane; and the great head, covered with snow-white hair, rested on the pillow. There was no pallor on the ruddy face—the sun of sixty years and every clime had burned its mark too indelibly for that—and the great gray eyes were fearlessly open.

But his doom had been pronounced; the tall, grim doctor, who stood impassive by the window, had announced that death was only a few hours off. There was a nurse in the room with the doctor, and two city officials stood decorously at one side. The Admiral had relations, but none were within a thousand miles, and he was known in this inland town only by repute. He would not have been known even then had it not been for the bright young reporter of the *Star*, who had smelled out his name on the hotel-register and vainly tried to interview him.

"I'm retired," said the Admiral, gruffly, although not unkindly, "and I don't know a damn thing about politics. As for war—no, sir!—I will *not* talk. Why should I? Every third lieutenant and gunner's mate has had his say, and there's nothing more to talk about."

And he stuck to it, although the reporter made a very pretty story of a column or more out of what the Ad-

miral did not say. He was on his way South to pass the winter; there was rheumatism in his bones, and he felt that he ought to humor his old frame after maltreating it so many years. "He leaves on the morning train," said the *Star*. But he did not leave. Death bade him halt.

If a shade of fear struck that stout old heart, his bronzed face gave no sign. The wall-paper portrayed an interminable array of impossible shepherds watching sheep; a loud clock ticked on the shelf; and outside there sounded the spasmodic rattle of passing wheels. The Admiral had nothing to do but look and listen and think.

Then there came a rumbling word or two sounding somewhere in front of the house. The landlord's voice was heard in reply, and then more rumbling. Then a pause, followed by the landlord's footsteps on the stairs.

"He says — it's a stranger to me—his name's Huckins, he says," came in strangulated whispers from the landlord to the doctor—"and he wants to see the Admiral." The doctor made a gesture of frowning dissent.

"Yes, I know—I told him *that*," returned the landlord, shuffling uneasily, "but he won't go 'way—said he'd walked fourteen mile from Bean Ridge just to see the old man—that's what *he* called him," he hastened to add, apologetically.

"Tell him," began the doctor.

"What is it?" asked the Admiral, turning his head slightly.

"A man—Huckins—Bill, from Bean Ridge," explained the landlord.

"Knows me, does he?"

"Says he does. Yes, sir. Says he was a sailor-man —got sailor's clothes on."

"A sailor! Well, well," said the Admiral, shortly, "if he wants to see me, why not?"

The landlord looked at the doctor, and the doctor nodded acquiescence, although with a frown, and the landlord faded away. The clock ticked a few more

noisy minutes, and then the door opened to admit the sailor-man. He was an old fellow, with scanty hair brushed neatly, clean-shaven face showing a square jaw, big blue eyes and a skin like old sole leather, tough, brown, and wrinkled. He wore a man-o'-war's man's suit, faded, but brushed as clean as a lady's glove, and his shoes were polished like mirrors. A bright white knife lanyard crossed his shirt front, and there were a few faded letters on his cap, which he whipped off on entering.

The Admiral lifted his eyes slowly and looked at him.

"Well, my man?" he said, at length, with the same intonation he had used a thousand times at sea.

The sailor brought up his hand in a salute.

"It's him," he said in a hoarse voice, that smacked of fogs and salt air, "it's Old Blue!"

The doctor and the nurse looked shocked, the city officials awed, and the landlord shivered. On the Admiral the effect was electric.

"I says to myself when I hears of you bein' here," continued the sailor, coming closer, "it's Old Blue for a hundred dollars, and it is! I'd a knowed them powder-marks on your neck among a thousand. And I walked fourteen mile to see you, and see if you remembered Bill Huckins, as was master-at-arms on the old *Pioneer?*"

"Huckins?" the Admiral raised himself on his elbow with a mighty effort. "Ah, yes, I remember you now." He held out his hand, and then sank back on the pillow. The doctor was by his side in an instant, but the Admiral waved him away. "You came to see me, Bill?"

"Yes, sir. Heard you was in the sick-bay, and I come to cheer you up a bit. I was laid up last winter myself with a crick in my back."

"You are in the Asylum, I suppose?"

"Asylum? Bless your heart, sir, no! I raked up these togs for old times' sake—seemed more natural like. I've got a boy that's makin' his two-and-a-half a day steady, and I've got a pension of twelve dollars a

month. That's for a rap I got from a shell nigh thirty year ago."

"When was that, Bill?"

"Same day you got them marks on your neck from the breach of number two gun. Don't you remember when we steamed up the Mississippi, when the guns was double-shotted and slappin' into us every ten feet? That was on the old *Oregon.*"

"Yes, I remember," assented the Admiral, with glistening eyes.

"You was captain then, and when Lieutenant Fifer says to you, 'You go aft,' says he, ' 'cause there's sharp-shooters behind that ridge,' you says, says you, 'You go to the devil!' I was workin' a Rodman near by, and I laughed right out at that, although 'twasn't no laughin' times then."

"No, indeed; no, indeed. But we silenced the fort, didn't we, Bill?"

"Didn't we, though! Knocked it clean out of sight! You couldn't fool with the *Oregon* that trip. And two months later, d'ye remember how we sunk the *Tenesas*, in the Gulf, after a runnin' fight of a day and a night?"

"Quite well, Bill. She went down, though, and we got no prize money out of that engagement. But the two blockade-runners the next week—eh, Bill?"

"They was pie, sir. We'd been rich if them pickin's had kept comin' along. I was drafted on the *Powhatan* after that capture, and it was three years 'fore I saw you again. Then I was with you in the *Shawnee* on the China station, and I was bow oar of the barge when we beat the French fleet in the race off Yokohama."

"Ah, Bill, those were famous times," said the Admiral, gazing fixedly into the air with his great eyes.

"Warn't they, though! And when we went up the Straits together in the *Columbia*, when you'd just got your Commodore's pennant and took charge of the squadron—seems like it was always my luck to be shipmates with you, and I didn't want nothin' better."

"And here you are again, Bill," said the Admiral, with a smile.

"Yes, sir, here I am, on deck again. When I heard you were here, I said to Tom, my son, 'I'm goin' to see the old man once more.' And Tom—he's never been to sea and don't know much, he says, 'Sho! he won't see you.' And I says, 'He was a shipmate of mine for more'n fifteen years, and I always did my dooty. I could take my tod with any blue jacket, and more'n once it took the whole marine guard to get me over the side, but I never shirked, and if Old Blue ain't got a good word for me, he ain't the Old Blue he used to be.'"

"Right, Bill, right," said the Admiral, smiling through the wave of pain that rippled across his face. "You were always a good sailor, Bill, but you're an old hulk now, like me."

"Sure enough, sir, we're laid up in ordinary now, sir; but there ain't nothin' can wipe out them old days from the log-book, if they have gone by."

The Admiral closed his eyes and murmured, "Gone? Ah!"

"Yes, they're gone, and we're goin'," said Bill, his voice thickening, "but we did our dooty, and no man can say 'no' to that."

"Yes, we did our duty, old shipmate," said the Admiral, in a voice that had become thin and weak. "Where are you, Bill? It is getting dark——"

Bill's cap dropped on the floor, and he seized the Admiral's hand in his. The others drew back without a word.

"Shipmate," said the Admiral, once more.

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"I'm on my last cruise, Bill."

"God bless you, sir, you're comin' straight into port, but you ain't dropped anchor yet."

"Just going to, shipmate," said the Admiral, while the great gray eyes stared straight ahead.

"Stand by," said the sailor-man, softly.

A convulsive clasp of the withered and the brawny hand, a sigh, and Bill's grizzled head sunk on his breast.

The long voyage was over, and the Admiral had dropped his anchor.

There is something intensely fascinating to the readers of our time in an East Indian setting, and in the blending of weird East Indian superstitions with the thread of a story. These are most skilfully employed in this absorbing tale, from *London Society.*

THE FIEND IN THE BANYAN TREE.

"The startled bats flew out—bird after bird—
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter."—*Hood.*

"What man! Defy the devil; consider he's an enemy to mankind."—*Twelfth Night.*

"PUT the bed there—there!" I said, pointing with my finger to the exact spot in the veranda where I wished it to be.

The servants, led by the old ayah, hesitated.

"What are you waiting for? Bring the cot here,"—and I walked forward to the only airy corner of the bungalow.

They did not move. To try my temper still more, the two men who carried the cot set it down, and deliberately stood at ease. The ayah, a woman who had been with me for years, and who had nursed me and my babies with infinite tenderness, came toward me.

"What is the meaning of all this?" I asked with impatience. "Why don't you make the men do as I tell them?"

The woman's face assumed an anxious look, and her eyes sought mine in mute appeal. I laid my hand on her shoulder and gave her a gentle shake.

"Bring that cot here."

"Missus!—please missus! not here! Not good for the children. This air bad air. Missus sleep in the house."

"I tell you I won't. It is hot and close in the house, and there isn't a single punkah in the place. Look at the roof; it has no ceiling-cloths and must be full of

snakes and rats. I won't sleep in the house. Bring the beds here, and put up the mosquito-nets."

With the exasperating mulish obstinacy of a native servant, she stood as stolid as a rock under my orders.

"I tell boys to put the cots on the other side of the bungalow," she exclaimed suddenly, brightening up as the new solution of the difficulty presented itself to her mind.

"What! All among the pots and pans, the coolies and the bullock-carts? No! I am not going to sleep there. Ayah," I said very seriously, "you don't generally disobey me in this way. Tell me what you mean by it. Why am I not to sleep here?"

She was silent; but compelled by the almost fierce gaze under which I held her, she whispered:

"That tree bad tree!"

She turned a frightened glance on the magnificent banyan that stretched its long, smooth, snake-like branches against the fiery sunset sky. Its many stems formed a small grove by the side of the bungalow, and its broad glistening leaves spread a network of foliage above. It was a tent built by nature's own hand and fit for a king. I was surprised to notice that it was unappropriated by the drivers of my carts and their bullocks. Usually they gladly availed themselves of such noble forest shelter. In the present instance they preferred, without exception, the bare, open space on the opposite side of the bungalow.

A little eddy of wind brushed through the twisted gray stems as we stood there, carrying with it a whirl of dry, crackling leaves. The ayah shuddered and murmured "Swami!" below her breath.

"What is wrong with the tree?" I demanded.

She approached yet nearer, and whispered very low in my ear—so low that I could scarcely catch the words:

"Devil in that tree."

I drew back in absolute wrath.

"You idiot! You, a Christian woman, believing in such heathen rubbish! You know as well as do I that there is no such thing as pishashas."

She was abashed at my words, and began to look ashamed of herself. She alluded no more to the devil in the tree, but harped back to her first objection.

"Not good for children to sleep here. Wind blowing in the night, bring fever—dysentery."

"At this time of the year! Nonsense! The tree will keep off the dew and shade us from the moon. Now come; waste no more time in such foolish talk. Bring the cots—mine and the children's—at once."

Very sullenly she obeyed me. The men who carried the heavy old teakwood bedsteads out of the bungalow turned fearful glances on the tree; they also looked curiously at the Englishwoman who dared to brave the anger of the devil.

The bungalow was one belonging to the forest officers of the Tinnevelly district, in South India. I, the wife of one of the senior men, was moving by easy stages across country to the sea-coast, for a change of air. My husband did not accompany me. Duty called him elsewhere. I was perfectly safe in the hands of his people, and well supplied with fowls, milk and bread at each stage. I might have traveled faster had I chosen to make longer journeys, but with two small children I decided that short stages were best; hence I found myself at this bungalow, which was seldom used. A new one had been built at a station only six miles farther on. Six miles meant two hours more on the road, and in the increasing heat of the day I had not cared to do it.

I brought my own servants and kit with me, and was, therefore, independent to a great extent of dak bungalows. All I needed was some sort of a roof over my head to protect me from the sun in the day, and cots to sleep upon at night. Camp-tables and chairs I carried with me, beside camp-crockery and cooking-utensils.

More than once during the ten days of travel I had slept with my children in the open air, under the sheltering foliage of the tamarind or banyan. To-night I did not propose to have the beds carried out under the tree, but only asked to have them placed at the corner of the open wide veranda next the tree.

My orders were at last obeyed and the beds put into position. The elder child was to occupy the inner one, and I, with my baby of nearly two years old, was to sleep in that nearest the tree.

The children had their supper and were put to bed.

The heat of the day was giving place to the cool night-wind which blew in off the sea, distant about thirty miles. I fancied I could smell the salt water and the seaweed already. My spirits revived within me as I thought of the pleasant change in store for us all. Fresh fish every day, fresh oysters and prawns; fresh breezes and salt-water baths to put a little strength into the pallid, flabby limbs of my little ones.

I put on an easy tea-gown, hunted up the third volume of an interesting novel, and sat down to dinner. I read as I ate, and the story helped me to forget that, in spite of the rather imposing menu, I was swallowing in each dish the everlasting chicken—first in cock-a-leekie soup, secondly in white fricassee, thirdly in rissoles, fourthly in roast fowl, fifthly in curry. A dish of plantain fritters—people in England know plantains better as bananas—served as the pudding course, and plantains did duty for dessert.

"Clear away," I said, rising from the table and dropping into my long folding canvas chair. "Bring me a cup of weak tea, and then you may all go to bed. Leave the lantern in the veranda, David, and mind that you wake the men in good time, so that we get off at five."

"Yes, ma'am."

He paused by my chair, as though he wished to speak.

"Well?"

"I think missus will find it plenty cool over there," indicating the corner where the beds were placed, and where the children were now fast asleep.

"Nonsense; I know best. Now go and finish your work, David, and don't trouble about me. If I want you, I will call you."

"I sleep on that side," he replied, pointing to where the bullocks and their drivers were quartered.

"Very well, I will send ayah to wake you at the right time."

I took up my book.

"You can go," I said as my eyes sought the page.

He turned away without another word, and busied himself over the dinner table. Once he whispered to the ayah as she passed to her evening meal; she replied, but I was too much interested in my book to heed what they were saying. When the table was cleared, he brought me my tea. After putting the cup down on the little round table by my lamp, he fetched the lantern and went out toward the tree. I wondered what he was going to do. He walked slowly round it, making a large circle. The dead leaves crackled beneath his feet as he brought each foot heavily down upon the dry earth. This was to frighten the snakes away. I lost sight of him in the darkness, but I could see his lamp bobbing about on the other side, as though he were examining the locality by the aid of its light. When he returned, I handed him my empty cup.

"Plenty of rubbish over there," he remarked; "I send sweeper to clear away."

"Oh, go and eat your rice, and don't bother about that tree!" I replied, impatiently.

He left and I read on. It was a very lonely spot, but I had no fear. I was as little afraid of robbers or wild animals as if I had been in my own drawing-room. The quiet of the evening was only broken by the whirring and grinding of the cicadas in the jungle beyond the banyan. By and by the jackal would doubtless raise his melancholy wail in his traditional cry of a dead Hindoo—o—o! But he was a very familiar neighbor by this time. I had learned to sleep peacefully through his querulous cry of "Where! where! where!" unless, indeed, he chose to look for his dead Hindoo under my bed, which had happened once on the journey; then I arose in murderous wrath, and flung a slipper at his slinking form as he sneaked off to his companions.

I read on, absorbed in the love-troubles of the heroine, without heeding the time. Suddenly a sharp scream

startled me; it more than startled me—for the moment it terrified me. It was like nothing less than the agonized cry of a woman undergoing the process of having her throat cut in slow, deliberate inches. In another second I laughed. It was a bird, a kind of night-jar, commonly known as the devil-bird. I had heard it once before; and, having heard it, it was impossible to forget the fiendish cry as it rent the air. The bird to-night had uttered his discordant note in the banyan tree.

I listened for the answering call of its mate. From the distance came the responsive shriek. A heavy flapping of wing told me that the ghastly owl had gone to join its companion. I sincerely hoped that the two would find pressing business in the opposite direction, and not trouble the neighborhood of the bungalow again with playful imitations of the cries of murdered women.

There was a stir among my servants and followers.

I could easily guess at the terror which had struck their hearts. To them it would be the malignant call of the tree-spirit.

I got up and entered the house to perform my toilet. In spite of open doors and windows, the rooms felt hot and ill-ventilated; and how the place smelt of bats! It must have been years since the walls had known the cleansing whitewasher's brush. The rafters and beams which supported the thatched roof were coated with dust, and huge bats fluttered among the ragged reeds of the thatch.

I hurriedly put myself into my night-garments and my flannel dressing-gown; then, turning down my lamp, I went out into the cool, fresh veranda, and crept beneath the mosquito-curtains. My little son was sleeping soundly. The ayah's mat and pillow lay on the floor at the foot of the cot. As soon as she had finished her chat with the cook and the butler round the camp-fire, she would come to bed.

Perfectly easy in my mind, I lay down and gazed out at the bright star-lit sky. The moon would not rise till midnight. How beautiful it was! There was a large planet, as white and steady in its light as a small moon,

illuminating a patch of sky seen through the foliage of the banyan. The network of branches and leaves reminded me of gigantic lace-work, and the many stems which supported the wonderful canopy seemed like a crowd of slender, long-limbed giants sheltering beneath it. Surely that was a firefly flitting over the carpet of dry crisp leaves. No! its flight was too steady, too systematic. It could be nothing but a lantern carried by a man's hand. Yes. There was the sound of cautious feet among the dead leaves, and the whispering of several voices.

What could my men be about? Surely, David was not so foolish as to extemporize a gang of sweepers at this time of night to clear away the rubbish. And what a dust he would raise! Stupid fellow! If I had not changed into my night-clothes, I would go and order them all to their beds.

Hark! What was that? The cry of a fowl.

"Cluck! cluck! cak! cak! ca—!" Its frightened cry was stifled by a strong hand.

The beauty of nature was marred by death. The stars no longer seemed so pure and lovely; the night wind was soft and balmy no more.

Another cry! "Ba'a! Ba'a!" A blow. Again death marred the repose of the night.

I shuddered. The poor goat which had just suffered was probably to provide me with so-called mutton to-morrow. It was really too bad of David to allow these creatures to be slaughtered before my eyes. One must eat to live; but I had often told the cook that all signs of his detestable work must be scrupulously hidden from me and the children.

The lights multiplied; more lamps glimmered under the tree and a fire was being made.

This was intolerable. It was the last straw to my endurance. The night breeze set in from that direction, and I should get all the abominable smoke.

I rose from my bed, put on my slippers, and went down the broad veranda steps. I could see quite a number of men grouped by the tree. They were not

cooking their evening meal, for that had been disposed of long ago round the camp-fires. Cook was not to blame, that was quite certain; these people were my cartmen and the family of the men who had charge of the bungalow.

Tiresome, provoking creatures! They were holding a heathen function and were worshipping the tree-devil. Such being the case, it was impossible to stop them or interfere with them in any way. I must make up my mind to an hour's wakefulness, and think myself fortunate if everything became quiet again at the end of that time. The shriek of the night-jar had roused them to this sudden activity in religious ceremony. To them it was the angry cry of the devil.

I moved into the shade and stood against one of the outstanding stems which supported a huge spreading limb overhead. I could see without being seen.

There was a small devil-stone—a shapeless mass of black gneiss—set up against the parent trunk of the tree. Before it was erected a low platform of brick and mud—the work of bygone generations of worshippers. On this platform burned some small lamps, merely flaming wicks of cotton floating on pans of oil. Immediately in front of the stone lay the bleeding heads of the fowl and goat, together with leaf platters of rice, sugar, butter, curry stuffs and cocoanut.

A cautious step behind startled me. It was the ayah. She plucked at my skirt and drew me back.

"Why have they begun all this nonsense to-night?" I asked.

"Missus hear that devil-bird! Those men plenty frightened. They say devil grumbling, got nothing to eat. But if they see missus, they will be more frightened—perhaps they will run away. Because missus spoil poojah. How should we get on to-morrow without bullocks and drivers?" she added, seeing that I was not inclined at first to move.

Her last suggestion had the desired effect. It would be very awkward indeed if my means of locomotion forsook me. I returned to the veranda.

"That devil, very bad mischief devil, these men say——"

"There is no devil in that tree," I cried, interrupting her.

She shrugged her shoulders, implying ignorance on her part and disbelief. The old woman prided herself on her Christianity, and often spoke contemptuously of the heathen and their practices. She and the butler would have scorned the notion of taking part in any heathen worship.

Yet, so deeply rooted are the superstitions of the country that even the educated class of servants—Christian though they may be—cannot wholly divest their minds of belief in the pishashas. They are as much a possible reality to them as the ghost is to the imaginative Englishwoman. Indeed, the pishasha is a kind of ghost. It is the spirit of a man who has led a wicked, evil life on earth. Obliged by his sins to haunt after death the neighborhood where they were committed, he is supposed to take awful, monstrous forms, and to find pleasure in nothing but vindictiveness and spite. The spirit must be propitiated or dire calamity will befall the people who live in its vicinity; fire, accident, sickness, death—all are put down to the door of some evil demon.

The ayah corrected herself. "Those men say that the devil is bad. I don't know. I know nothing. I'm Christian woman. But if those bandymen think devil is angry still, they will all run away to-night."

The muffled sound of the tomtom commenced. It was not unlike the beat of a horny hand upon an old oil-tin. Possibly one of my own tins had been pressed into service. Then followed a monotous nasal chanting, diversified with occasional low propitiatory cries.

"How long will they go on with that folly?"

"One hour, two hours, and then they will go to sleep."

"Then I must go to bed and try to sleep as best I can," I murmured.

The sounds were familiar enough, for, in the south

of India, the air is filled at times with the beat of the tomtoms.

"Lie down, ayah, and go to sleep."

With the instinctive solicitude of her nature she looked at the elder child, tucked it up still more securely in its mosquito net, and turned to the baby. The little man was restless and hot; he tossed in his sleep and flung his arms about. She patted him softly till his sleep deepened into stillness. Then she wrapped herself in her sheet, head, arms and feet, till she looked like a swathed mummy, and laid herself down on her mat.

The sounds of the chanting and tomtoming continued with monotonous regularity. I turned my back on the tree, and very shortly fell into sound slumber.

I do not dream often, but I did that night. I dreamed that one of my cartmen had got the old ayah on her knees before his disgusting swami-stone, and was deliberately hacking her head off with a blunt knife. The scream that she gave broke the dream and restored me to consciousness. In a moment I was awake, every particle of sleep dissipated. I sat up in bed and gazed uneasily around. It was not only the dream that had aroused me; there must have been something else.

Ah, of course, the devil-bird again.

At the foot of my bed knelt the ayah, her terrified face raised to mine. She was speechless with fright, and showed more whites of her eyes than I thought it possible for her to possess; without turning her head, she rolled her eyes around in the direction of the tree from whence the sound had come.

I was afraid she would have a fit. I jumped out of bed, throwing the mosquito curtains upon the frame above. The moon had risen, but did not shed much light, and my lamp had burned out.

"Ayah! ayah! don't look so terrified. It is only the owl again."

I forbore to call it by its more familiar name.

She rose to her feet.

"I will call the butler," she gasped, shuffling off in the direction of the servants' quarters.

I took up the lamp and hurried after her.

"Here, get this lighted again. Hallo! What's that?"

Some animal passed out of the house just in front of the ayah. She saw it and stood still, paralyzed with fear. It went slowly down the steps toward the tree. "It is only a jackal," I said reassuringly. "Come, ayah, don't be so frightened. You are not generally afraid of jackals.

"That's no jackal," she replied in a hoarse whisper.

The poor woman trembled so that she could scarcely speak.

The animal did not seem to fear the sound of human voices, for we could hear its feet among the dead leaves. It was scratching the ground. It might have been a dog; but, whether dog or jackal, I did not feel disposed to let it remain so close to the house. I ran down the steps toward it.

"Shoo! shoo!" I cried. "Get out, you beast!" and I stooped to pick up in pantomime the fear-inspiring stone, of which all creatures, from the blundering buffalo to the impudent crow, have an instinctive terror.

It did not move away. The scratching continued, and in the checkered moonlight I could see that it was larger and stronger than an ordinary jackal. I was not in the least alarmed, for I knew that no dangerous animals were to be found in that district. I ran back into the veranda, put on my slippers and seized my sun umbrella—a strong stick substantially petticoated in cotton. Out I went again.

"Shoo! shoo! shoo! Go away!" at the top of my voice.

For I remembered that a good discordant human cry might strike terror even to the heart of a tiger. This, however, was no tiger.

My fresh onslaught caused the obstinate animal to bestir itself. It ran, or rather shambled along, skirting the house; then, instead of departing, it doubled back.

"Get me some stones, ayah, and come and help."

But not a sound or movement did she make in response.

I returned to the veranda a little out of breath. The woman stood exactly where I had left her, holding the extinguished lamp in her rigid fingers. She was now ghastly with fear. I laid my hand on her naked arm and clasped it lightly above the elbow.

"Ayah! ayah!" I cried sharply. "Don't look like that! It's only a big pariah dog."

But my words made no impression; her gaze was fixed on something which she could see at the end of the veranda beyond the cots.

And now a most extraordinary thing happened. I have never been able to account for it satisfactorily. Either my imagination, being suddenly played upon, served me a curious trick, or contact with the ayah communicated to my brain the distorted vision which held her in such spellbound horror.

Following her gaze, I turned my eyes in the same direction and met a most unaccountable, blood-curdling sight.

The creature which I had been so vainly endeavoring to frighten away was coming up the veranda steps—coming toward us with slow, deliberate mien. It shuffled along in half-human style, crawling rather than walking. It seemed stoutly built, with long, sinewy limbs. But its form of body was nothing compared with its hideous head. The face was ashy gray and had a weird, human look, with a fiendish expression of malignity upon it. I could see its teeth and fiery eyes. Its mouth was extended in a grin of malice, and its red tongue hung out, parched and dry.

With hand still upon the arm of the ayah, I, too, gazed spellbound on the monstrosity. It seemed to see us, but showed no fear at our presence.

It approached the bed whereon lay my youngest child. I had thrown up the curtains, so that even the small protection of the mosquito net was gone. The little one was thus exposed to the night air and to the full view of the mysterious creature.

When it reached the bed, it reared itself up on its hind legs and bent over the child with an evil grin of malice.

It was the action of a few seconds only. The ayah gave a piercing shriek, rivalling the owl, and dropped to my feet in a faint.

With one bound I flew toward the monster. It dropped upon its four legs and shambled away, disappearing in the direction of the tree, with a hoarse cry.

The extraordinary part of it was that the moment I released my hold on the ayah's arm, the humanity of the creature faded, and it became thoroughly animal in its bearing. The malignity changed to a gaunt, starved expression, such as extreme hunger or thirst might have produced. The fiendish look in its eyes gave place to one of distress. After all, I must have been mistaken. It was only a jackal or a gray wanderoo monkey, hunting for a drop of water to quench its thirst, after its meal on the sacrificial offering.

The ayah's cry, followed on the screech of the night-jar, had roused the servants. They came hurrying up, and David was the first to detect her inanimate body, lying in a heap upon the floor. I had enough to do to soothe my startled children, who were both crying fretfully.

A little water restored her senses; she sat up and glanced round her fearfully. The sight of the butler reassured her; her tongue was loosened, and with voluble speech she described the scene in her own language.

Yes! she had seen a fiend! Missus might say what she liked; it was the tree-devil—nothing but the tree-devil—and, oh! Amah! it had called her child, her darling sonnie! Hark at his crying! To-morrow would bring fever. One cock and one goat were not enough. It was such a bad, wicked devil. Hadn't she told the bandymen to kill ten fowls and three goats? Hadn't she promised to persuade missus that the jackal had taken all the fowls? They would not listen to her advice; they had only killed one fowl and one goat, and the devil was not satisfied. Now he would take her darling sonnie. Oh! Avoh! Amah!—

"What time is it?" I cried loudly and sharply to the butler, who was listening with elongated face to the

drivellings of the old woman. He glanced at the moon.

"About half-past three," he answered promptly.

"Tell the drivers to get ready to start. I cannot sleep again. Come, ayah! Stop all that noise. Come and dress the children. David, tell the cook to get the bread and milk ready; and you make me some tea. Now, look sharp."

I poured a torrent of words on the terrified crew, knowing well that nothing but an excess of bustle and work would dispel the horrors of the night.

No need to rouse the drivers. They were all awake, thanks to the early morning note of the devil-bird. Never before had the packing been done so promptly; never had so expeditious a start been made. There were no loiterers. Each man strove not to be last. Instead of heading the procession as usual, my cart was the last to move out of the yard. It was with unscrupulous goading and shouting that my driver urged his bullocks forward, not satisfied till he had placed a string of vehicles between himself and the dread tree, lest, true to the old proverb, the devil should take him as the hindmost.

Alas! poor sonnie developed fever and dysentery. The sea-air did him no good. He had always been a delicate child. After some weeks of anxious nursing, his gentle soul returned to its Maker, and, with many tears, I laid his faded little body in a quiet grave by that lonely Indian seashore. The doctor said that he had had the fever in him for some time previous, and that nothing could have saved him.

The ayah, however, had other convictions, which were also held by the rest of my servants. To her dying day—Christian though she be by profession and faith—she will always believe that he was sacrificed to the malignity of the tree-devil.

Here is a pretty little lesson for flirts. It appeared anonymously in *Le Français*, and has been translated for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter.

A VILLAGE KISS.

JACQUELINE was a young country girl, who was sixteen years old last apple-harvest, and who was a veritable model of sincerity. Every one who knew her loved her. Her skin was as white as the field-daisy, and as brilliant as the corn-poppy.

On market-days Jacqueline mounted her donkey, laden with fresh vegetables, the appetizing products of her mother's kitchen-garden, and went to sell them in Blois. When she appeared in the square, every one welcomed her. Her eyes were so innocent, her voice so engaging, that every one was attracted by her. Her carrots seemed better than her neighbors'; her potatoes had not the least scar upon them; and her crisp lettuce or cresses from the brook, looking as fresh as herself, were quickly bought, and at the highest price.

I ought not to forget to tell you that Jacqueline had no lovers.

At the village festival she made the old dance till they named her the daughter of miracles. Protected by the purity of her thoughts, she kept the young men at such a distance that they dared not even so much as press her finger-tips in sign of friendship. Jacqueline had a friend in Blois who was going to marry one of the village boys. Suzanne was her name, and she was two years older than Jacqueline. She was pretty, but coquettish; attractive, but capricious. She had made her lover miserable by her changing and fanciful moods.

One day Jacqueline was about to set out for the village, when Blaisot, the lover of Suzanne, approached her and said:

"I suppose you will soon see my affianced."

"In an hour-and-a-quarter from now," answered the courteous fruit-seller.

"And you will speak to her?"

"As I am speaking to you."

"Oh! how happy you will be!"

"What prevents you from going and having the same happiness?"

"She is gentle and kind to me sometimes, and then she is cold and haughty and I can do nothing to please her."

"Bah! my friend, you are too good to be worried like this. If I were in your place, I would have no fear—no more fear than of the house-wolf, of which we are often told, but which we never see."

"While waiting, will you do me a kindness, Mademoiselle Jacqueline?"

"What is it?"

"Take a commission for Miss Suzanne."

"With much pleasure, Monsieur Blaisot. Is it something to give her?"

"It is, indeed," said Blaisot, rubbing his hands to give himself courage.

"And is it heavy to carry?"

"Light as a feather."

"Then I will take it," said the imprudent messenger.

Quick as a flash, Blaisot leaned down and kissed the pure white forehead of Jacqueline.

"What are you doing?" cried the astonished girl.

"I have given you a commission."

"That kiss?"

"It is for Suzanne. You will carry it free of charge, and not leave it to be called for. You know the address," and he disappeared, laughing, around a turn in the road.

It appeared as if the kiss of Blaisot was heavier than he said, for Jacqueline remained pensive and serious all the way to Blois, and her donkey even seemed to share her melancholy.

On her arrival at Blois she took care not to break her promise, and ran quickly to Suzanne's house.

"I have a commission for you!" she said.

"Ah! An embroidered bonnet?—some fresh nuts?—a rosary blessed by the priest?"

"It is none of these things."

"Oh, hurry and tell me."

"It is a kiss from your betrothed."

"Oh, from him! He is no longer my betrothed!"

"Ah, well! take the kiss all the same, even if you are having another quarrel. What! you refuse?"

"Absolutely!"

"You will not leave it upon my hands?"

"You need not feel it a burden."

"But I do not wish to keep a kiss that does not belong to me."

"That is your own affair. You should not load yourself with such merchandise. It may cost you a good deal before you are through."

Jacqueline returned to the village in a state of great perplexity. It seemed as if the kiss was visible upon her forehead, like the mark of the penitent in the church. She hurried as fast as she could, and as soon as she reached home, she hastened to call upon Blaisot, to whom she related her lack of success.

"Oh, she is in one of her proud fits. It is all the same to me. I am rich. I am not ill-looking. What is the old saying? If I find another girl that pleases me, I will drop Suzanne like a weight that is too heavy."

"But your kiss—what shall I do with it?"

"Whatever you wish!"

"Ah! well, if I had known——"

"But if you will please return it to me——"

The charming girl advanced, then quickly recoiled.

The remedy was worse than the disease,—the restitution more difficult than the deposit.

"That cannot be," she said. "It is only our husbands that we kiss."

"Ah!" broke forth Blaisot, "there are coronets which crown heads not nearly as pretty as yours. I have never seen such pretty feet in any shoes, and you have a form and eyes to make a harvester dance when his day's work is done." And in his turn he began to sigh.

Meanwhile the pretty girl had reflected. She must avoid gossip. She accordingly ran to the house of the

good priest to ask his advice. He was not at home, but Bertha, his housekeeper, received her.

"And this is all that troubles you!" said she when she had heard Jacqueline's story.

"And is it not enough?"

"Console yourself. There is near here a deposit of kisses, which contains plenty of room. Since I came to live with the priest more than a hundred thousand kisses have been put there."

"Truly?" exclaimed Jacqueline, overwhelmed.

"Yes, and there is still room for you to deposit yours." She conducted the young girl to the altar of the Virgin.

There Jacqueline freed herself from her load.

She felt herself lighter by many pounds after she had deposited the kiss upon the cold stones of the altar.

Two days after this, she met Suzanne in the market, clothed in gay apparel.

"See here, little one!" she cried mockingly. "I have reflected. Blaisot has a hundred acres of ground and a good mill. You may give me that kiss now."

"Oh, dear!" answered Jacqueline, "I can't walk round the world with other folks' goods. I no longer have it."

"Where is it then?"

"Upon the first step of the altar of the Virgin Mary."

"That's good. It is not lost. I will go and get it the very first time I visit the hamlet."

But it was Suzanne who was snared this time, for that very evening Blaisot came to Jacqueline's mother's house in his Sunday clothes.

"Mademoiselle, I must have my kiss!"

"It is in the chapel. Go get it there."

"That one does not belong to me. I gave you something to carry. You must either execute your commission or return the kiss to me. That is wholly just. I leave it to your mother."

"What should she have done with it?" asked her mother. "Jacqueline can kiss only her husband, and she is still too poor to find one."

"I will give her all that I have," said Blaisot.

"You!" exclaimed the two astonished women.

"Of course, when I give commissions, I pay for them. I will add to it my hand, and my name. Will you accept them, beautiful messenger, and be my wife?"

Jacqueline, overwhelmed, nearly fell into her basket of salad.

When, several days afterward, Suzanne went to seek the kiss, the priest made her acquainted with what was going on. Shaking his white head and smiling, he said:

"You will never find it again."

"Somebody has taken it?" asked the coquette.

"No, but Blaisot and Jacqueline were married this morning. They kissed together the holy stone. The three kisses are now blended in a pious and chaste love. You can never recognize now, my dear, the one that was destined for you."

Stories of exciting games of chess are among the most powerful in the whole field of fiction. Here is one of a game which was played for a life, as told by Raymund Allen in the *Strand Magazine*. Possibly it furnishes a clue to the mystery of the wonderful chess automata.

CHESS AND HYPNOTISM.

A CERTAIN grotesque and oriental-looking black chess-knight served as a paper-weight upon the library-table of my friend, the Colonel, and had often roused my curiosity. One night he told me its story. This is what he said:

"I don't know whether you take any interest in such subjects as hypnotism, thought-reading, and so on; but, if you do, you may perhaps be able to form some scientific theory to explain my story. Personally I used to be unbelieving in such matters, but my scepticism was modified by the adventure I am going to tell you of. Very well, then. On one occasion in India, many years ago, I had got leave from my regiment for a few weeks, in order to join a shooting expedition which had been got up by one of my greatest friends, a man many years older than I was then, and of much higher rank in the service. When, however, I arrived at our appointed meeting-place, I found my friend, the General, preparing for a more warlike excursion against a marauding tribe who had lately been extending their cattle-raids across our frontier. The shooting expedition having fallen through, I readily accepted the General's suggestion that I should accompany his force as a volunteer, and see some sport of a more exciting kind. Nothing of any interest happened, however, till we were across the enemy's frontier and the force was encamped one night under a brilliant moon on a hill overlooking a thickly-wooded valley.

"I was strolling round camp with a cigar, when I was joined by one of the younger officers, who, not being on duty, was refreshing himself after the day's march in

the same way, and we continued our walk together. We stopped to admire the view at a point where we could look down on the valley, and presently we fell into an argument as to whether a bright surface which caught the moonlight in a glade of the wood below was water or a smooth slab of rock. It happened that my companion particularly prided himself on the keenness of his sight, and a few days before had won a small bet from me on the subject. I, too, thought that I had good eyes, and, feeling sure that he was wrong in his contention that he could detect a gentle ripple on the surface in dispute, I offered him a second bet that it was rock, and proposed to settle the question by myself going down to the spot. He accepted my bet, and I gayly started down the hill alone, telling him with a laugh to have the stakes ready by the time I returned. I never for a moment supposed that I was running any risk in the affair.

"I rapidly made my way down over the short grass of the hillside, and, marking the direction of the spot in question, soon plunged into the darkness of the wood, the cavernous depth of whose shadows was enhanced by an occasional glint of moonshine. I am not naturally superstitious. I have no particular aversion to midnight graveyards or haunted rooms, but I must confess I felt an uncommonly disagreeable feeling of something like dread when I got inside that wood. Everything was absolutely dead and still. Not the faintest rustle of a leaf, not the chirp of an insect, nor murmur of water, but dense and awful silence! It excited my nerves. I almost imagined I saw black shapes moving under the trees, though it was quite impossible that anything not luminous should show against such an inky background. I felt my way cautiously, stopping constantly to hear if anything was moving near me. What cracks the twigs under my feet gave! What a resounding crash reverberated in the gloomy shades when my foot set a loose stone rolling! My nerve was gone, and I felt horribly uncomfortable. I would gladly have paid my bet to be back again in camp, but

I was bound to go through with my search now that I had once begun, and I should make myself a butt for the wit of the regiment if I turned back half-way to confess myself scared by the dark. After a longer time and with more difficulty than I had anticipated, I reached the slab of rock, for such it proved to be. Here I was clear of the trees, and I stood for a few moments in the bright moonlight, so that my friend above, who I knew would be watching for me to emerge from the shadow, might see that it was not water on which I stood. Then I turned, and struck out for the camp.

"I had not, however, pushed my way far through the undergrowth, when I was tripped up suddenly by what I at first took to be some stout creeper or protruding root. I fell forward on my hands, and had not time to get on my feet again before I learned that it was no accident which had overthrown me. Before I had time to offer the least resistance, or even to utter a shout for help, I felt myself seized round the neck by a grip like a vise; a few seconds more, and I was gagged, bound, and carried off through the forest, quickly, but in silence. As soon as subsiding astonishment left room for any other sensation, I felt a paroxysm of rage, as well against my own folly in running into such a trap as against my sudden assailants, whom I cursed none the less heartily for my inability to utter a sound. The futility of passion under the circumstances gradually subdued me, if not to philosophic fortitude, at least to sufficient calmness to speculate on my probable fate and on the chances of escape. For some time I seemed to be borne down hill and over irregular ground; then we must have emerged from the jungle on to more even ground, for the pace became quicker and smoother. This may have gone on for some twenty minutes or half an hour, and then my captors came to a halt. I was set on my feet, and my eyes and mouth released from their bandages. This change of condition did not, however, conduce to my comfort or reassurance; for, while an armed native on each side held me firmly by my pinioned arms, a third presented a huge horse-

pistol at my head at a yard's distance. For a few instants I endured an agony of suspense. I shut my eyes, and waited for the bullet to crash through my brain.

"I have met many men who have at some time or other looked death pretty closely in the face, and you must often have heard it said that a man's mind at such moments reviews in a flash long periods of past time with an almost supernatural vividness of perception, but I didn't feel anything of this. I only felt that I might be dead in another second, and then, with a determination to 'die game,' which was rather an animal sensation than an articulate thought, I set my teeth and opened my eyes to meet those of my enemy. The pistol was still directed at my head, and the grim Indian still kept his finger on the trigger. I faced him defiantly.

"At last he spoke. He spoke a dialect which I only imperfectly followed, but I understood him to say that, if I tried to escape, I should be shot on the spot. I felt no confidence that I was not being reserved for a more horrible death, but the instinct of self-preservation kept me passive. When at last the pistol was lowered, and I no longer stood in momentary expectation of death, I looked round me and perceived that I was in the middle of a group of some half-dozen Indians, and as many horses. On to one of these latter I was lifted, and secured in the saddle by leathern thongs, my captors not choosing to give me the chance of escape by leaving me the management of my horse.

"After about an hour's hard riding, during which the rapid motion and the blowing of the cool night air on my face and hands acted as a sedative on my racked nerves, we reached the encampment of the hostile tribe against which the expedition had been sent out. And now came the strangest part of my adventures; the part which bears on my eccentric play to-night."

Here Colonel Bradshaw paused to stir the smouldering log in the grate to a bright blaze, and then, staring into the fire and keeping the poker in his hands as he leaned forward in his chair, went on with his story:

"The human brain," he resumed, "is incapable, I

imagine, of continuing to experience any intense sensation for very long. It reaches the maximum tension, and then one set of perceptive faculties becomes deadened. The previous incidents of the night had exhausted my capacity for fear, and, as I was led before the chief of the tribe to hear his decree concerning me, I awaited the decision with indifference. The moon was now hidden behind a hill, but some twenty torches lit up the spot with their lurid flames. The party that had caught me had obviously been sent out to reconnoitre the movements of the English force, and the chief had been beguiling the time of their absence with nothing less than a game of chess.

"I was the less surprised at the nature of his pastime, as I knew that the game was widely known in India, and had played it with natives myself. The chief's antagonist was a man whom I imagined, though I can't say exactly what suggested the idea, to be the priest of the tribe. He was shorter than the others, but his face suggested an extraordinarily active mind, and this, combined with his regularity of feature, would have made him a strikingly handsome type if it had not been for the fearful malignity of his expression. I wish I could give you some faint idea of that man's face, for it was the most terribly sinister face I have ever seen. His back had been turned toward me at first, but from the moment when I met the scrutiny of his black deep-set eyes, which glared on me with a look of mocking, triumphant deviltry that must have been borrowed from the fiend below, I was fascinated, and could see nothing but that one diabolical face. If there is any truth in the Eastern belief in possession by evil spirits, a demon looked through that man's eyes. A shiver ran through my frame as I met his gaze, and I felt that he was exercising some subtle influence over me, against which every fibre of my body, every atom of my being, stiffened in revolt. I felt that, unless I exerted the whole of my will-force in resistance to the dread spell he was casting over me, I should lose myself in his identity, and become the creature of his wicked will.

"While all this was going on in me, the chief must have been listening to an account of my capture, though I was unconscious of any words being spoken near me, till the priest turned from me to him, and, pointing to the chessboard which stood on a sort of low table, made a suggestion which at first I did not fully grasp. Its meaning was soon made clear to me, however. I had some knowledge of their dialect, and most expressive pantomime conveyed the rest. I was to play a game of chess with the chief; the stakes, my life against a safe conduct to the English lines. Never before had I encountered so terrible an opponent, and never in the history of the royal game had so fateful an issue been fought out on the battlefield of the sixty-four squares. I took my seat opposite the chief, and the torchbearers formed a wide ring round the table, looking, as the dancing torch-flames shone on their dark faces and limbs, like so many stalwart statues of bronze. Within the circle, and a little behind the king, stood the evil priest, motionless, with folded arms, including me and the board in his keen, hateful gaze. I knew exactly where he stood before I looked at him, and again I felt the same dread fascination working on me that I had felt when I first set eyes on him. The chief moved the pieces indeed, but I was conscious in some subtle way that it was against his attendant's mind that I was pitted—that the former was scarcely more than an automaton under the thraldom of the priest's marvellous will, and the game itself only a sort of emblem or shadow of our inward contest of mind and personality.

"I played appropriately enough, with the white pieces. We proceeded very slowly, and in absolute silence. No word was spoken nor sign made when either king was checked. Hour after hour the priest kept the same motionless posture behind his chief, who played with the same monotonously mechanical movement of the hand, the same vacant mesmerized expression on his face. Hour passed after hour, unmeasured by any clock, unmarked by any change, except in the position of the pieces on the board. The chief, or

rather the priest, played well; and, though I often seemed on the point of gaining a decisive advantage, some unforeseen move always deferred my victory.

"One piece in particular repeatedly thwarted my combinations. Again and again it constituted the weak point in a series of moves which should have brought me victory. Again and again, when, after straining every faculty of my brain, I made my move and raised my eyes to watch in the priest's face the effect of a stroke to which I saw no reply, a faint mocking smile would curl for a moment his cruel lips, and the black knight would be moved once more, threatening dangers which I had overlooked, and dashing my premature hopes to the ground. It was as though some secret link existed between that particular bit of bone and the grim, ghoulish spectator of our game. Piece after piece was taken from the board and dropped on the sand at our feet; the ranks of pawns grew thinner and thinner, but still that one black knight, now the only piece left to my antagonist, sprang over the board, evading my deep-laid plans for his capture. The opening was long passed, the wavering fortune of the middle-game had waned with the long hours to an end-game. The inexorable moment which must decide my fate was close upon me.

"Suddenly I seemed to be gifted with extraordinary powers of calculation. I shut my eyes, and saw mentally the position change through every possible variation like the moving pattern of a kaleidoscope. I could have announced a mate. I knew, to the exclusion of any doubt, that I must win. I made my move, and then, concentrating every particle of the hatred and loathing with which the diabolical priest had inspired me into one flashing look of defiance, I tried to hurl from me the cursed influence of his malignant spirit and to crush it into subjection to mine. His face changed with a hideous contortion of defeated evil purpose, and then the whole devil in him rose to one supreme effort in answer to mine. He passed his hand lightly across his eyes, and leaning over his chief scored

his forehead with a malevolent frown. The glare of his glittering eyes seemed to pierce to the brain of the head they nearly touched. The new spell began to work on the chief. An uneasy, puzzled look came into his face, and this time it was with an uncertain, vacillating movement that he raised his hand to play. Again I looked at the priest. His expression was more bitterly mocking and more exultingly fiendish than ever as he directed my glance by a movement of his own to the hand which hovered over the board. His treacherous design was transmitted in a flash to my mind by some unexplained interaction of our brains. An illegal move with the black knight, in defiance of the rules of the game, was to snatch the nearly won victory from my grasp. I saw the fatal square on which the piece would be placed, and I felt that, if it reached it, I was lost. There were no spectators to whom I could appeal against the glaring illegality, unconscious, no doubt, on the part of the hypnotized chief, and I should never be able to convince him afterward of having won unfairly. I must prevent the move.

"The struggle entered on the final phase. I had shaken off the priest's mesmeric influence over my own will; now I must wrest the chief's will from the same thraldom by the exertion of a counter influence. It was the critical moment, the culminating point of a conflict which must at last be decisive. The chief's hand raised the black knight slowly from the board, and as it began more slowly still to descend, I exerted all my power of will in one burst of straining endeavor to compel another move than the false one the priest intended. Every nerve in my body seemed strung to cracking. The wonderful sensation of my individuality, of the intangible essence which constitutes self, wrestling grimly for life with the demon-possessed priest, became intensified till my brain reeled. The chief's hand came slowly, slowly down; wavered, as though uncertain on which square to place the piece. One final effort of will exhausted my faculties of brain and volition.

"The ordeal was over; light had triumphed over

darkness as day had risen on night. I knew the priest's influence had been overcome, his spell cast off, without the evidence of the chess-board; I saw him fall backward on the ground, every muscle of his body twisted in horrible contortion, as though some invisible power of the air were wreaking its vengeance on his ghastly, spasm-shaken form. The grewsome sight ended quickly, the violence of the seizure was resistless; the muscles relaxed, the limbs stretched out, and he lay a corpse.

"How I parted from my strange entertainers I can't tell you. I only know that the chief honorably fulfilled his pledge, and that, as I galloped away with a guide for the English camp, over the fair, green earth, the woods and fields dancing to the breeze in the sunlight, the bright clouds carrying my thoughts to the depths of the blue expanse they sailed in, I experienced a new sensation of keen, ecstatic enjoyment of life for its own sake. All Nature seemed to have a fuller, better meaning to me than ever before, to be the physical expression of boundless power and happiness moving with all-inclusive purpose toward some eternal end, and I myself was filled with a thrilling vitality in the consciousness of being a part of the joyous whole."

The Colonel made a long pause, and then, with a reluctant sigh, as he dismissed the wide expanse of glorious landscape which lay stretched out before his mind's eye, to return to the commonplace of his immediate surroundings, he picked up the paperweight from the board, and replacing it on the writing-table, concluded:

"Later in the day, and after my return to the English camp, I found this little fellow in a pocket of my coat. Whether I had put it there myself or how it got there I don't know, and to what extent the incidents of the night were colored by my own excited imagination is a chess problem I must leave to your own solution."

The Eastern writers, as a rule, though their notions on the subjects of pleasure and personal indulgence are, to say the least, rather expansive, are seldom wanting in appreciation of the purely ethical, and love stories with a moral. They abominate stinginess, and forever extol the virtue of generosity, as in this amusing little sketch from the Persian.

A PAIR OF OLD SLIPPERS.

THERE was at Bagdad a merchant very notorious for his avarice, and his name was Abou-Cassem-Tambouri. Although he was enormously rich, his clothes were constantly in rags and tatters, and his turban, made of coarse stuff, was so dirty that its color could no longer be distinguished. Of all his garments, however, his slippers were the most remarkable: the soles were kept together by large, clumsy nails, and the upper leathers were pieced in every direction. The famous ship Argo was not made up of a greater number of separate fragments. During the ten years of their existence as slippers, the cleverest cobblers of Bagdad had exerted their utmost skill to tag together their remains, and had only succeeded by adding piece on piece, by which means they had become so heavy that they had passed into a proverb; and, when any one wished to describe something weighty, the slippers of Cassem were always the object of comparison.

One day, when this merchant was taking a walk in the great bazaar of the city, a proposal was made to him to buy a considerable quantity of glass: he agreed to the offer, because it was an advantageous one; and having heard, a few days afterward, that a perfumer who had fallen into difficulties had nothing left but some rose-water, which he would of course be obliged to sell as speedily as possible, Cassem took advantage of the poor man's misfortune, and purchased it at less than half its value. This successful stroke of business had put him into good humor, and, instead of giving a

great feast, according to the custom of Eastern merchants when they have made an excellent bargain, he thought it better to take a bath,—a luxury which he had not enjoyed for a long time.

While he was taking off his clothes, one of his friends, or at least one who pretended to be a friend—for it is a rare thing for a miser to have one,—remarked to him that his slippers made him the laughing-stock of the whole city, and that he certainly ought to purchase a new pair.

"I have long thought of doing so," replied Cassem; "but my old ones are not so very bad, and will last me for some time even yet." While talking, he stripped off his clothes and entered the bath.

At this juncture the Cadi of Bagdad came also to take one. Cassem, having finished his bath before the judge, went into the first apartment, where he found his clothes, but not his slippers, which had disappeared, and in their place was a new pair, which our miser was convinced were a present from the man who had made him such a friendly remonstrance about them. With that he made no more ado, but put the new pair on his own feet, thus sparing himself the pain of buying new ones, and left the bath overjoyed with his prize.

When the cadi had finished his bath, his slaves looked about in vain for their master's slippers, and, finding only a wretched pair, which were immediately recognized as Cassem's, the police ran after the supposed sharper, and brought him back with the stolen goods upon his feet. The cadi, after having exchanged the slippers, sent Cassem to prison; and, as he was well known to be rich as well as avaricious, he was not allowed to come out of prison until he had paid a handsome fine.

On returning home, the afflicted Cassem threw his slippers, in a rage, into the Tigris, which flowed beneath his windows. A few days after, some fishermen, drawing up a net heavier than usual, found in it Cassem's slippers. The nails with which they had been patched had broken the meshes of the net. The fisher-

men, out of spite to Cassem and his slippers, threw them into his room by the open window, and in their passage they struck the bottles containing the rose-water, and, knocking them down, the bottles were broken and the water totally lost.

The grief and wrath of Cassem on seeing this may easily be conceived. He cursed his slippers, and, tearing out the hair from his head, vowed that they should cause him no more mischief; and, so saying, he took a spade, and digging a hole in his garden, buried them there.

One of his neighbors, however, who had borne him a grudge for a long time, perceived him turning up the earth, and ran and told the governor that Cassem had dug up a treasure in his garden. This was enough to excite the cupidity of the officer, and he sent forthwith for Cassem. In vain our miser declared that he had not found money,—that he was only employed in burying his slippers. The governor had calculated on his bribe, and the afflicted Cassem could only regain his liberty by paying down a second large sum.

Our friend, in an extremity of despair, consigned his slippers to Shytan,* and went and threw them into an aqueduct at some distance from the city, thinking that this time he should hear no more of them. But, as though the evil spirit he had invoked was determined to play him a trick, the slippers somehow found their way just to the very pipe of the aqueduct, by this means preventing the flowing of the water. The persons who had the care of the aqueduct, having gone to ascertain the cause of the stoppage and to remove it, carried Cassem's slippers to the governor of the city, declaring them to be the cause of all the injury. Their unfortunate owner was thrown again into prison, and condemned to pay a larger fine than before. The governor who had punished the offence, and who pretended to be indebted to no one for any thing, returned Cassem's precious slippers to him again most faithfully; and Cassem, in order to free himself from all the evils

*The Devil.

which they had brought upon him, resolved to burn them. As they were saturated with water, he first of all put them out to dry in the sun on the terrace of his house. But Cassem's evil genius had not yet quite done with his tricks, and the last which he played him was the worst of all.

A neighbor's dog prowling along the terrace on the housetops spied out the slippers, and, darting at them, carried off one of them. As, however, the dog was playing with it, and tossing it about, he contrived to let it fall off the terrace on to the head of a woman who happened to be passing below. The fright and the violence of the blow together made the poor woman quite ill; and, her husband having carried his complaint before the cadi, Cassem was condemned to pay a fine proportionate to the misfortune of which he had been the cause. Going home, he took up his slippers, and returned to the cadi with them in his hands. "My lord," he exclaimed, with a vehemence which excited the judge's laughter,—"my lord, look at the fatal cause of all my troubles! These abominable slippers have at length reduced me to poverty: be pleased now to issue a decree, in order that the misfortunes which they will, no doubt, still continue to occasion may not be imputed to me."

The cadi could not refuse to comply with this request, and Cassem learned, at great expense, the danger there is in not changing one's slippers often enough.

Tennis and love are combined in about equal proportions,—perhaps the usual proportions,—in this light and merry story by R. I. Cowen, who is evidently thoroughly posted on his subjects.

THIRTY—LOVE.

THE STORY OF A DAY.

His name was James, not Ganymede. It was a closely clipped lawn upon which he trod, instead of the divine heights of Mt. Olympus. Neither were those gods and goddesses,—those four athletic figures, clad in white and red flannel, disporting themselves upon a portion of the lawn marked off with lime, and wrangling in tones high and heated. James never wrangled. He scorned it. As he approached the group, bearing his tray so skillfully that the ice scarcely tinkled in the pitcher, the expression of his countenance bordered upon the sublime.

"Set it down there, James," called Miss Edith, and James set it down, with mathematical precision, exactly in line with the tennis net and about three feet from it. The pitcher was of earthenware, and the glasses came from the kitchen and were not cut. James had been told by Miss Edith that, when tennis balls came violently in contact with cut glass, broken glass was apt to be the result. Hence the discrepancy between the elegance of James's demeanor and the painfully plebeian character of the burden which he bore. To show annoyance, however, was beneath him; and Jupiter himself, to say nothing of Ganymede, could not have bent the upper portion of his body at a right angle with his legs in a more classical manner than did James as he deposited upon the grass the pitcher, of the earth, earthy, and the glasses so mournfully suggestive of the kitchen and the cook. Musingly, with his eyes upon high heaven, yet respectfully always, James withdrew.

Five minutes earlier, as James was standing in his pantry decorously polishing a tablespoon, the door had opened briskly, a scarlet-capped head had presented itself to his view, and Miss Edith's voice had said: "Water on the tennis-court, please, James, and lemonade and gingerbread at half-past eleven."

"Yes, Miss," said James. His vocal organ did not correspond in dignity with the rest of him. It was most undoubtedly squeaky. Miss Edith paused. Twice within a week James had qualified his respectful assent to similar orders with "The lemons is h'out, Miss." The lemons were evidently "h'in" this time, and Edith was spared the necessity of a sigh over the inconvenience of living four miles from a lemon. A moment later her red-and-white tennis-skirt had fluttered across the lawn, and the game had begun.

Just as James appeared with the water, Edith, who was playing at the net, jumped into the air, gave a downward blow with her racket, sent the ball into the net and said "Deuce."

"Deuce!" vociferated Eric Allen, with a vicious tug at his moustache. "Eric always loses his temper when he plays with me," had been Edith's comment before they began. "Deuce! Why, you're wild! It's thirty—love. They're thirty, and we're love," he added unnecessarily.

"So it is," said Edith, as she backed to a position for receiving the next ball, "and much nicer for them than if it were deuce. Papa does so love to win."

"By Jove!" growled her partner.

"What's the matter with you, Eric? I haven't seen you in such a fiendish humor since—yesterday morning,"—the last words were jerked out as Edith made a frantic effort to receive a ball which came flying at her from her father's racket, and sped by her with the rapidity of light.

"Vantage!"—duet from Mr. West and Ned Whitney. Eric Allen laughed. "'Tis strange—'tis passing strange—'tis pitiful the way you miss those balls," he said. Miss West looked at him with an air peculiar to

Miss West. "Sears himself couldn't have taken that ball, and I don't pretend to play better than Sears."

"Children! Children!" expostulated Mr. Neil, while Ned Whitney sat down upon the handle of his racket and smiled. "Stop quarreling. Ready, Eric?" The swift ball was returned on this occasion, and was volleyed back by Ned Whitney over Edith's head. Edith struck wildly at it, then turned to see Eric do likewise and fail. "Game," called Mr. West.

"Why on earth, Edith, didn't you take that ball?" demanded Eric.

"For the simple reason that it wasn't mine. You ought to have taken it yourself."

"It was yours. You had no business to miss it."

"Eric, don't you speak to me in that tone again. If you do, I won't play with you."

"Well, I don't care if you don't." Eric had never before said anything quite so outrageous or insincere. Even his "tennis temper," for which allowances were always made, was no excuse. Fire flashed from the gray eyes under the scarlet cap. "I wouldn't forget that I was a gentleman if I were you." Edith's voice was unusually quiet, and consequently crushing.

"By Jove! I draw the line! Mr. West, Edith says I'm no gentleman, and I appeal to you. Did I say anything ungentlemanly?"

"Ned," observed Mr. West, turning to his patient partner, "you're no lady." Then to Edith, "Go on, my child, it's your serve. Anyone would think you and Eric were two years old."

Edith began to serve. She played in wrath and silence, and she played well. Game after game was won. Eric looked almost meek, but neither he nor Edith spoke.

"Set!" at last gasped Edith, breathlessly triumphant, and the four players moved towards the water-pitcher.

"Miss West," her father said, as he handed her a glass of water, "allow me to present to you Mr. Allen." A smile crept into the gray eyes under the scarlet cap and twitched at the corners of the sweet red mouth.

"I'm happy to meet you, Mr. Allen." A small hand was placed in a large brown one, and was clasped tightly, while Mr. Allen mentally called himself a boor.

Peace and politeness reigned upon the tennis-court during the next two sets, and enthusiasm waned.

"I've had enough," said Mr. West.

"I've had enough," echoed his daughter. "There's nothing that fatigues me so much as to have Eric lose his temper." That young gentleman looked unutterable things—some of them were nice—but wisely held his tongue.

"There is lemonade in the dining-room," Miss West announced as they strolled toward the house, "and gingerbread."

"I don't care much for lemonade," Eric said as the two young men and Edith sat in the cool and darkened room. "It doesn't quench my thirst"—filling his glass for the third time. "This gingerbread is bang-up, though. Got any candy?" Silence from Miss West whose mouth was full.

"You might as well tell him. He'll hunt till he finds it." Ned Whitney rarely did anything so trivial as to speak, but when he did, pearls of truth fell from his lips.

"He may hunt. He ate every bit there was in the house yesterday, and he owes me a pound besides. I'm going to order the buckboard. Is anyone going bathing from your house, Eric?"

"Everyone. They are going to take Ned's and my things down to the beach. We're going to drive down with you, if you'll be so altogether lovely as to let us." Edith had vanished before this sentence had reached its climax, and Eric resolved to repeat it next day. Edith often vanished in the midst of his remarks, and he was becoming accustomed to addressing the empty space where she had been.

"Buckboard's here," he called from the foot of the stairs as the clock struck twelve, and a crunching of gravel and wild barking from the dogs were heard. Edith appeared with a heterogeneous mass of scanty

garments and voluminous bathing-towels in her arms; Mr. West emerged from the library, and soon they were all rattling along on the road to the beach.

"Why don't you leave that beast at home?" demanded Eric from the back seat as Edith's great dog sprang into the air in front of the horse with a series of deep barks.

"Are you referring to Sir Galahad?" Even the back of Edith's head looked dignified as she asked the question. "He always goes where I go. Besides he likes to bathe as much as you do."

"And needs it more," Eric had the temerity to observe. "I should think he had been carousing on fifteenth-century fish from the way he smells."

"I scorn to pursue the subject further. Papa, can't you make him stop?"

"Which? Eric or Sir Galahad?"

"Sir Galahad. Be quiet, boy!" She ordered as the dog's barking became more wild. "Oh! will nothing make him stop?"

"Yes," said Ned, "a bullet violently inserted between his eyes, or a bag of dynamite tied to his tail."

"Ned! I thought *you* were a friend of mine." The reproach in Edith's voice made Ned feel that his speeches, rare as they were, were yet too frequent, and he descended abjectly from the buckboard, as it drew up in front of the bath-houses.

The Rockland beach stretched white and smooth for half-a-mile. A cliff sheltered it on one side—a long point of land on the other. Now the only sound to be heard upon it was the booming of the surf, breaking in long, level lines of foam. The day was perfect, so thought Eric Allen,—the first to come out from his bath-house—as he walked slowly up and down the warm, shining sand and waited for the others before taking his first plunge. The sea, blue as a liquid sky, flashed and sparkled in the sunshine. The waves came bounding shoreward, crested with white foam, and turned to the sea's own cool delicious green as they leaped and curved and broke upon the beach. White

sails flew by like silent wings, and faintly across the meadows from the distant town came the chiming of church-bells.

"It's good to be alive on a day like this," said Eric half-aloud. "Those bells make it seem like Sunday. Here they come. Heavens! what a noise they make!" They certainly did, as seven bath-house doors burst open, and Eric's four sisters, Mr. West, Edith and Ned Whitney, each carrying a pail, came running over the sand,—talking, laughing and screaming, only less noisily than when they plunged into the glorious waves.

The girls could all swim well,—on their sides, on their backs, under the water—anything the men could do, the girls did. So it was uncalled for in Eric Allen to swim gently up where Edith lay dreamily floating, grasp her, take her in tow in spite of her resistance, and strike out for shore, exclaiming: "Thank heaven! I have saved you!" This proceeding was repeated twice until Edith stamped and sputtered in her vexation. She actually left the water before the other girls did, and sternly refused to let Eric carry her pail.

She was sitting on a rock when the others came, clothed and in their right minds, from their bath-houses. She had been drying her red gold hair in the sunlight, which made a glory of it. Eric thought it lovely. "I'll soon be driven to despair, golden hair," he sang softly, and was rewarded with a withering glance.

"Don't be more of a goose than you can help," advised Miss West.

"Edith," interrupted Bess Allen, standing tall and graceful before her, "*when* are you going driving with me in my cart?"

"Why, I don't know, dear,—to-morrow if you want me to."

"Edith," said Eric, "*when* am I going driving with you in your cart? You said a week ago you were going to take me, and you have not done it yet. What's more, I don't believe you ever intend to take me."

"Mr. Allen, will you go driving with me this afternoon?"

"Miss West, it will give me the greatest pleasure."

"I will call for you at four o'clock. We will drive into town and stop at Lowler's, and you can get me that candy that you owe me."

"Oh! I say—"

"Come Edith. Good bye, girls," called Mr. West, and whatever it was that Eric had to say was said to Ned Whitney and the girls.

"To-morrow, then," shrieked Bess after the retreating buckboard, and Edith waved a towel in reply.

Mrs. Allen's afternoon nap in the veranda hammock was disturbed by Edith's fresh, young voice saying, "Whoa! Countess," and as she drowsily opened her eyes she saw that damsel, dressed in white, looking as dainty as the bunch of sweet peas in her belt, just stepping from her cart, while the faultless Peter stood at Countess' head.

"How sweet you look, dear," said Mrs. Allen as Edith stooped to kiss the gentle face. "Eric will be down in a minute."

"Eric is down now," came from the hall, and the owner of the name appeared, hat and cane in hand.

"Don't keep us, mother. We're in a hurry."

"I'm not, Mrs. Allen. I'd rather talk to you than have to listen to Eric for the next three hours."

"Fib," was Eric's laconic observation as he helped her into the cart.

"Where are you going, children?" asked his mother.

"We're going to have Eric's hair cut, Mrs. Allen. Good bye. All right, Peter," and Edith gathered up the lines. Laughter, admiration and a something warmer still were in the dark eyes that were turned on Edith as Countess trotted briskly out the gate.

"By Jove! if you don't beat everything I ever saw! I won't have my hair cut."

"Oh, yes, you will! You may be good, but you're not pretty with your hair that way."

"But I can't. Didn't bring any money."

"I'll lend you some."

"Well, I draw the line! That's adding injury to in-

sult. Make me have my hair cut, and lend me the money to do it with. You grieve me sorely. And you appear to forget that you're only twenty-two, while I'm twenty-six."

"I don't see what that has to do with it. No one would ever imagine it, anyway. You know papa said this morning you acted as though you were about two."

"I forbear to retort, for I suppose I must put up with abuse or be left by the wayside weary."

Edith laughed, and they drove on for awhile in silence. The leaves on the trees by the wayside stirred gently and threw fluttering shadows on Edith's white gown. Overhead a robin sang. From the distance behind them came the murmur of the sea. In front of them, moving slowly, six great oxen drew a wagon loaded with dripping, glistening kelp with fluted edges.

"Ah!" Edith drew a long breath as they came at last within sight of the harbor alive with sails and spars. "What a divine day this is! Do you know, it seems to me I never before had a lovelier summer? Aren't you sorry that it's almost time for you to go back to the city and resume the accumulation of wealth?"

"Sorry! Jove! It breaks me all up to think of it. Do you know why?" Eric lowered his voice. Peter was deaf, but to depend too much upon his deafness was unsafe.

"No, and I don't want you to tell me, either, for then I wouldn't have the fun of wondering."

Calmly spoken, but there was a faint tinge added to the color in her face. She continued a trifle hurriedly:

"What do you suppose the captain of the life-saving station has done?"

"I don't know," said Eric, gnawing his moustache.

"Why, he's ordered his men to shoot all stray dogs that come about here."

"Perfectly proper."

"Perfectly heathenish. I don't see how they can do it. Could you shoot a big, beautiful dog—shoot him dead?"

"If it were Sir Galahad and he had been toying with my legs, I could. Humbly and thankfully I say it."

"Go on, Countess." Countess jumped as the lash of the whip struck her. Yet it would probably have struck much more sharply could Countess and Mr. Allen have changed places. Countess resented the cut, slight as it was, and forthwith dropped her tail over one rein and clinched it tightly. Eric leaned forward and grasped the tail, removing it forcibly.

"Thank heaven!" he exclaimed with fervor. "Thrice to-day have I been the humble instrument of saving your precious life!"

If he expected gratitude, he was disappointed. Miss West sat very straight indeed, and looked directly in front of her. Mr. Allen surveyed her with a critic's eye.

"How stunning you look to-day! I like that gown."

Perceptible increase in the severity of Miss West's expression.

"Won't you give me a sweet pea for my button-hole? Do, and we'll call it square."

Miss West's thoughts apparently are miles away.

"See here, Edith, it makes the cold chills run up and down my spine when you look that way. I'll take it all back about Sir Galahad. Who is that you're bowing to? He looks like a regular tough."

"It would be very much better form for you not to call my friends toughs. He's as nice as you are, and much more polite."

"I don't believe he's a friend of yours. He's probably only an acquaintance. I know all your friends. But more of this anon. I tell you, I take back what I said about Sir Galahad. And to-night, when we are walking on your veranda, he may chew my coat-tails into shreds. Now, what more can I say? Look at me, Edith. Think how long I have known and—"

"Very well," said Edith, turning the full glory of her smile upon him. "I'll forgive you this time. Here's the barber shop. Get out, Eric."

"Edith, if you let me off this once, I swear I'll come

in to-morrow afternoon and have my hair cut at my own expense. Just drive on to Lowler's and I'll get you two pounds of candy."

"I never refuse a bribe," laughed Edith, "but I thought you had no money."

"I've just discovered some in a hidden recess of my raiment. Edith, you are an angel. By Jove! and you shall have three pounds." And she had them.

The sun had gone down, leaving clouds of splendor behind him when Eric stood upon the veranda, watching Edith drive away. In the crimson glow of the western sky hung a silver thread of new moon. The calm breast of the sea shone with opalescent tints. An infinite calm had descended upon the earth. Eric caught the words of a quaint old love-song that Bess was singing softly in the twilight of the library. A passion of longing rose in his heart. "This very night," he said through his set teeth, "I shall learn whether she is to be a blessing or a curse to me."

. . . . . .

"Eric! Really! I thought the rash vow you made this afternoon as to the liberties you were going to let Sir Galahad take with your coat-tails would be sufficient to give you such a headache that you couldn't possibly come down."

"Put something on and come out. It's a divine night. Good evening, Mrs. West."

"Ah, Eric! I haven't seen you for several days. I've been so engaged in various ways that I've missed you every time you've been here. Edith, are you warm enough?"

"Quite mamma."

"Don't step off from the veranda. It is very damp."

"Did you see Eric this evening?" asked Mrs. West of her husband, as she went into the library. "He looked so very queer; quite pale, and such a restless light in his eyes. I'm afraid he's going to be ill."

"I'm afraid he isn't," replied Mr. West, mysteriously, and became so absorbed in his paper that he did not have to reply to his wife's shocked exclamation.

Mr. West liked Eric, but Edith was the apple of his eye.

Up and down, up and down on the veranda walked two figures—one tall and dark, and one that gleamed white in the starlight. Up and down, up and down, treading silently behind them—Sir Galahad. Edith fitfully hummed a tune. Eric was silent. So was Sir Galahad. The atmosphere seemed charged.

"Say something, Eric," commanded the girl upon his arm, and then, half-frightened, wished she had not.

Eric turned and faced her. His face was gray and his eyes burned.

"I love you," he said, and his voice was hoarse and strange. "I love you so utterly that I am nothing but my love for you. If you will not be my wife, I must know it now—now. And then I shall go away where I can never look upon your face again. Speak to me, Edith."

"You haven't asked me anything yet, Eric," the sweet voice trembled.

"My darling, do you love me?" The man's whole soul was in the question.

The slender figure near him swayed, the gray eyes that almost always laughed at him were raised to his, and in their depths a solemn splendor shone.

"I love you," she whispered, and Eric took her in his arms.

It was ten o'clock when Mrs. West opened the door and called "Edith," and shut it again, shivering. She thought the night wind cold.

Eric paused with his hand on the handle of the door, and Edith stooped to rest her cheek for a moment on Sir Galahad's great head.

"When shall it be, beloved?" Eric asked.

"When?" Edith repeated dreamily. She put her hand on his, turned with it the handle and pushed by him through the door.

"When? oh!" and a little laugh came from her. "When you are thirty—love!"

"The deuce!" said Eric.

Mary McNeil Scott, who has prepared this story expressly for the Oriental number of ROMANCE, says of it that it is a very famous old tale of Satsuma, and has never before appeared in any other than the Japanese language. It is a pity that "Yomei," the hero, could not have acquired his fame without cheating and lying,—but these trifling peccadilloes do not seem to affect a man's reputation in eastern stories, if he only gets through his difficulties all right. In justice it might be added that the East does not hold a monopoly of this peculiarity.

A GOOD-FORTUNATE ONE.

MANY years ago, there lived in Tokio a certain nobleman, renowned for his wealth and his great philanthropy. It was his delight to wander about the streets at night, unattended, and disguised as a simple samurai (knight or retainer), and so, untrammelled by rank or dignity, enter the theatres and tea-houses of all classes.

One night he was sitting in a tea-garden in a humble portion of the city, when three young men, dressed as laborers, sauntered in, and, seating themselves near him, called for refreshments of the cheapest kind.

"Will you not honor us by joining in our humble repast?" said one, addressing him with the courteous humility which distinguishes all classes of Japanese. "I see by your two swords that you are a samurai, and far above us in rank, but you seem lonely, and we should feel honored if you will join us."

The nobleman, pleased by this cordial invitation, immediately left his solitary square of matting and seated himself near the speaker.

"What Daimyo (feudal lord) do you serve?" they asked him, when the formalities of welcome were at an end.

"None," answered the nobleman. "I am a ronin (wandering knight), a free and independent samurai, having left, by my own will, the service of the Duke Itsu," mentioning his own name.

"I have heard that he was a very kind master," said one of the young men. "Why did you leave him?"

"Oh," said the Duke, "he had many strange and undignified habits which kept me in a state of constant mortification. He would wander about the streets of Tokio at night, entering into the commonest tea-houses, and talking familiarly with persons of the lowest rank. I do not doubt that he has been on this very spot."

"Oh, no!" cried his listeners, in some excitement; "he surely would not come to this cheap place."

"I wish that he would come," said one of the three, with a sigh. "I would beg a favor of him."

"What is it that you would ask?" said the nobleman, with great interest.

"My one wish," answered the speaker, "is to ride a horse. I have dreamed many times of being on horseback, and it was delightful beyond words, but I expect to die without ever gaining my desire."

"And what would *you* ask, if the Duke were here?" said the pleased nobleman, turning to the second youth.

"My great wish," answered he, "is to eat a dinner exactly like the one the Duke eats every day. If I could have one such dinner, I would ask no more."

"And now tell us your desire," said the nobleman, addressing the young man who had first given the invitation for him to join their party.

"I would not be satisfied with either of their wishes," said the young man, slowly. "I would desire to live a whole day and night as the Duke lives. To eat from his dishes, to ride in his kago (palanquin), and, at night, to sleep in his bed. Then would I be contented and happy."

"The Duke's slumber is not the happiest," said the nobleman with a sigh. "Spies and secret enemies lurk, as poisonous serpents, under the castle walls."

For some time longer, he conversed with them, learning the name and abode of each; then, bidding them a cordial farewell, he left the tea-house, and made his way to his stately castle.

In the morning, a body of servants, carrying heavily

adorned kagos, were sent to invite the young men to the castle. Their surprise and delight knew no bounds, and when the mighty Daimyo welcomed them as friends, and seated them in the place of honor, they were ready to burst with pride.

For the one who had wished to ride, he ordered his finest steed, caparisoned in white and gold, but when the young fellow was placed upon it, fear seized him, and he pleaded for mercy.

"No, no, you shall ride!" cried the Duke, in high good-humor, and the horse was made to prance and plunge about the court-yard, until the wretched rider fell to the ground, and had to be carried to his home.

The second guest, who had wished to eat as the Duke ate, was now conducted to the banquet hall, where such a bewildering and tempting array of strange dishes was set before him that he soon made himself ill, and was borne away groaning and racked with nausea.

The third young man was now the object of attention. All eyes were upon him as he watched his two friends taken away in misery and disgrace; but his head was set proudly, and he turned with composure toward the Duke.

"I have no fear," he said, in tones which were almost haughty, "I still wish to live one day and one night as thy equal; then I am content."

"Lead him to my richest bath," said the Duke to his servants, "and then attire him as my son."

When the young man re-appeared, his thick hair oiled and perfumed after the manner of noblemen, his tall form robed in silks of heaviest texture and the two swords of rank thrust through his gold-embroidered sash, he made such a picture of manly beauty that the Duke's heart yearned toward him.

"Would that the Gods had granted me such a son," he thought with sorrow. "But I have no heir to perpetuate my name, I shall fall like a lone pine-tree beside the river, and none shall come after me."

For that day, the young plebeian was given the name of Yomei (yo-may) which means one-day-spending, and

through all of the ceremonies and observances of rank he conducted himself with such modest dignity that all of the court-officials were filled with wonder, and whispered among themselves, "He is born to a high position."

That night he was given the ducal sleeping apartment.

After the castle was still and dark, he cautiously arose, and, lighting a candle, prepared to examine the wonders and beauties of the room. Hanging in the toko-mono (shallow alcove) he found a bow of ancient workmanship and a sheaf of arrows such as the old heroes once used. Fitting one to the bow, he gave it a backward pull, when, to his dismay, it slipped from his grasp, and went whizzing through the rich and painted mado (inner sliding walls).

He heard a low cry, followed by the thud of a falling body, and then all was again silence.

"Unhappy wretch!" he cried to himself. "My day of triumph has ended in murder. I have killed some one with my ignorant stupidity, and in the morning I shall be beheaded."

He blew out the candle, and went to bed, where he lay shivering and trembling until the day broke.

Then the sound of the moving servants came to him, and the coldness of despair filled his heart, for he knew that the discovery of his deed might come with every second.

Presently he heard a cry of alarm, and then, indeed, did he give himself up for lost.

"Here is a dead man!" exclaimed one, in frightened tones.

"Where is he?" "Who is it!" "Who killed him?" came a mingling of voices, as other servants ran crowding in.

"Why, it is the traitor Gujiwa, who has thrice attempted to kill our master." "Oh, blessed deed!" "What a beautiful shot. The arrow has pierced his left eye to the skull." "It is an ancient arrow from the Duke's chamber."

"The young stranger sleeps there to-night; he must

have sent the deadly shaft." "Ah! A hole in the mado! He must have shot through the mado." "What skill! What wonderful power; to shoot an enemy without seeing him!" "Wonderful! He has saved the master's life."

Yomei, listening to all this, became almost crazed with delight.

The sudden transition from despair to hope intoxicated him like strong wine. He threw his rich kimono (robe) about him, pushed aside the pierced mado, and strode toward the servants.

"Have you found the traitor Gujiwa, whom I slew last night?" he asked, haughtily. "Cut off his head and carry it to your master with my compliments. I suspected that this attempt would be made, and obtained an entrance to the castle by disguising myself as a laborer."

The servants grovelled at his feet.

"But, honorable lord," implored one, an old man who had been in the family for half-a-century, "How could you take such aim when the mado were closed?"

"Tut!" said the young man with a gesture of contempt, "I do not need both sight and hearing to take good aim. I can shoot any portion of the body by hearing alone. This time I selected the villain's left eye, just as he was winking it."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" they whispered in awe-struck tones; and he walked through their cowering ranks, with the air of a conqueror.

The gratitude and admiration of the Duke knew no bounds. Indeed, so pleased was he with the beauty, skill and courage of his young protégé that he took measures to formally adopt him; so Yomei was raised from the rank of a bamboo-cutter to that of son and heir to one of the most powerful Daimyo of the Empire.

He led a life of ease and luxury, and improved from day to day, so that his fame went abroad to other cities, and his adopted father grew to love him deeply.

But no life can be all happiness, and so for Yomei there was the thorn, the one dark spot.

This was in the person of his adopted mother, the Duke's wife, who from the first had been his bitter enemy. Having no children of her own, she was ungenerous enough to hate the innocent adopted son, who by his very presence reminded her that she had given no heir to the Duke. She also suspected that his skill in slaying the robber was not entirely genuine, and she had learned, beyond all doubt, that his antecedents were of the humblest. At first, she tried in every way to turn her husband against him, but, finding this impossible, she set to work to find other means of deposing him.

Soon there came a rumor of a band of robbers, who infested a hill in the suburbs of Tokio, and were so fierce that even the soldiers dared not attack them. The Mikado had offered a title and great wealth to any one brave enough to attempt their capture, but up to this time none had been found.

The evil step-mother, without consulting her husband, sent a letter to the court, saying that her noble son Yomei was thirsting for the opportunity to display his skill and courage, and declared that he was able to vanquish the band single-handed.

The Mikado, highly pleased with so much bravery, immediately dispatched a royal document to the young man, accepting his services, and ordering him to start forth the following morning.

Poor Yomei was again in despair.

"Alas! The end of my dream has come," he mourned to himself. "There are eleven arrows, and eleven robbers, and so I must kill a robber with each arrow. Oh! Why did I not keep to my bamboo-cutting, and leave ambition for the rich!"

His father grieved deeply to see him set forth, but, in spite of his sadness, was buoyed up by his evident anticipation of his son's success. The envious step-mother, affecting equal regret, offered to arrange a basket of lunch for him with her own aristocratic hands. She prepared all of his favorite articles of food, and then, for fear that some lucky accident might save him

from the robbers, put a small portion of deadly poison in each piece of food as she laid it in the hamper.

Yomei, unconscious of this double danger, bade them all a sorrowful farewell, and rode away with his eyes bent upon the ground. At one time he thought of turning his horse and making his escape, but then he reflected that death would be no worse than disgrace and the old life of toil, and so listlessly kept on toward the infested mountain.

He had reached the foot of this, when he heard loud, hoarse shouts, as if of triumph, and, filled with terror, he sprang from his horse, and rapidly climbed a tree. In a few moments the robbers were upon him. "Where is the rider?" called out one, looking about him with an aspect of such fierceness that Yomei well nigh fell to the earth.

"The horse is mine!" cried another.

"This is my saddle!" exclaimed a third, "See! It is heavy with silver."

"Ah!" from a fourth, as he tore open the hamper. "I have found the dainty fellow's lunch. Let us feast upon it, before we find and kill the owner."

Yomei, knowing nothing of the hidden poison, thought these moments his last. With the apathy of despair, he gazed upon them as they portioned out, with many a rude jest and remark, the food which had been destined for him.

"What carrion the aristocrats do eat!" cried the captain, throwing from him the remains of a small devil-fish stuffed with rice, sugar, and vinegar. "The thing is filled with medicine! It is bitter! By all the devils of earth and sea! It is poison! We are tricked!"

"It is poison! It is poison!" they all shrieked, running frantically past one another, with horrible exclamations and contortions of physical agony. "Where is the man?" they cried. "We are poisoned like frogs in a well! Where is he who has tricked us?"

"There he is!" called the dying chief, who had just caught sight of the cowering Yomei, "Shoot him! Up after him! Burn the tree! Ah-h-h!" But it was too

late. They lay about on the lush mountain-grass, in various attitudes of violent death, and their glassy eyes were all turned upward toward Yomei. The fears of that valiant youth, however, were at an end. He descended with a bold and careless air, and, walking from one to another, stuck an arrow deep into the left eye of each. Then mounting his horse, he rode home.

The first person to meet him was his step-mother. At the sight of him she fell to the ground, faint and stricken with fear.

"Are you not pleased to see me, mother?" he asked brightly. "I must thank you for the delightful lunch you prepared for me. See!" opening the hamper, "Every morsel has been eaten!"

His father's joy at seeing him alive was deep and sincere. "Why, my son," he said, after the ceremonials of welcome were through, "your armor is untouched, your hair is as smooth as when you left the house. How did you slay such a fierce body of men with so little exertion?"

"Oh! It was a simple matter," said Yomei proudly. "When they caught sight of me, they came toward me running side by side. I took the eleven arrows, fitting them all to my bow, which I held horizontally, instead of in the usual manner, and the arrows were placed so exactly that, as they flew, each was pointed toward a robber, and struck him directly in the left eye. You will find them all there now, each with the arrow sticking upright."

"Your skill is more than mortal!" cried the happy father. "Now you are a nobleman in your own right, and will be given a daughter of the Mikado in marriage. I foresee that you will add lustre to the ancient name which you bear." And he fell upon his son's neck and wept with pure joy.

After this the step-mother ceased in her evil designs, fully convinced of Yomei's supernatural powers.

He married a princess, built a great castle for himself, and to this day his name is a synonym in Japan for shrewdness and luck.

It sometimes seems as though no such deeds of heroism had ever been accomplished as by the British men and women whom the fortunes of war landed in India about the middle of the present century. Here is the record of one which may well stand beside any other. It is from the *Catholic Home Almanac* for 1866.

IRISH MARY.

A STORY OF THE SEPOY MUTINY.

It was in the early days of the Sepoy Mutiny, and the revolt had already begun.

At Little Futterhabad, a small government depot occupied by companies of the Sixth, one of the Inverary Rifles, and a battalion of native foot, under Captains Donaldson and Clare, though but thirty miles from Delhi, were all unconscious of any danger, till, two days before, a messenger on horse-back arrived at the cantonment with a note from the officer in command of the neighboring town of Susi, informing Captain Donaldson that some of the Sepoys there had raised cries of disaffection, that a large body of mutineers were reported as marching on the place, and therefore the officers of the Sixth were implored to start with all speed, and with whatever force they could muster, to intercept these latter, as, were they once to coalesce with the disaffected within the walls, the lives of the English would in all probability be the sacrifice. No time was lost in complying with the appeal contained in this dispatch, and the senior captain (Donaldson) thought himself showing extraordinary prudence in deciding not to take the native battalion, in which, however, he had full confidence.

The regiment marched out of Futterhabad an hour before sun-down, leaving behind it, besides the soldiers' wives and children and the civilians, an English sergeant and ten men to overawe (!) the native troops; also the young wife of Captain Clare, with her little baby two weeks old.

The overpowering heat, dust, and noise of the dirty little town had so affected Mrs. Clare, in her delicate state of health, that her husband had moved her to a deserted mosque, about a quarter-of-a-mile distant from the depot, and which, standing in a garden thickly overgrown with palm and tulip trees, made a pleasant sort of improvised bungalow for the invalid.

The fierce day had faded into evening at last, the evening of the day after the departure of the troops, and Mrs. Clare lay on her couch, her ayah squatted on the floor beside her, with her infant in her arms, and the punkah waving with monotonous regularity over her head, as it was pulled to and fro by a servant seated in the veranda outside. The croaking of the frogs could be heard distinctly from the pool in the deserted garden below, mingling with the sharp "cheep, cheep" of the lizards, and an occasional murmur from the cantonment, or the shrill "ta-ra" of the bugle for supper; but it was not to these customary sounds that Mrs. Clare was listening as she leaned rather forward on her elbow.

"What can it be?" she said at last. "Don't you hear it, Zeena? Can it be the Sixth returning?"

"The mem sahib is feverish. Zeena hear nossing at all; and de sahib Clare and de Sixth not go to come back till to-morrow."

"But we were to have heard from them to-day and there has been no message. Could anything have happened to him? Oh, no, not that! And yet it is strange, —no one coming near me this evening, not even Mrs. Smyth, as she promised or——there, Zeena, you must hear *that.*"

"That" was audible enough indeed, a cry from the cantonment, something between a shriek and a shout, and followed by a confused hum of many voices.

"Soldier got bhang*—drunk—mad," said Zeena lazily. "Sergeant put him in black-hole."

"It is news of some sort from the regiment. Zeena, give me the baby, and run up to the cantonment and

* An intoxicating drink.

see what it is; and ask Mrs. Smyth to come back and stay the night with me. Make haste, run." And as the lady clapped her hands impatiently, Zeena rose with the silent docility of her class, and, only waiting to lay the infant by its mother, and place a tumbler of cooling drink beside her, sped swiftly through the low, arched doorway, and disappeared into the night.

Left alone, Mrs. Clare's anxiety increased. The strange rolling sound was now plainly distinguishable for the measured tramp of soldiers, and that some great excitement was going on at the cantonment was more and more evident. Once a shrill cry rose faintly into the air. Then came the sharp clang of a bell as suddenly suppressed, and yet no thought of danger there or to herself crossed her.

. . . . . .

A step aroused her. A quick, noisy step coming nearer every moment. Was it her husband? No, that was no military tread, but a woman's, and not the smooth, catlike footfall of the Hindoo, but one flying up the garden walk with frantic, almost clumsy, haste; another moment, and there was a clatter on the marble steps; another, and the heavy cloth curtain draping the arched doorway was roughly torn aside, and a young woman, with a sun-burnt, freckled face, hung round with tangled, reddish elf-locks, and lit by a pair of laughing blue eyes, bare arms hugging something like a dingy bundle of rags to her bosom, herself clad in similar rags of divers hues, badly covered by an old plaid cloak, thrust herself into Mrs. Clare's dainty presence—the girl, nick-named "Irish Mary," wife of a soldier in the Sixth, and a kind of self-constituted sutler to the corps.

She seemed beside herself now, for, after a pause for breath, she darted to the couch where the pretty, patrician lady lay, and exclaimed, in tones hoarse with excitement: "Mrs. Clare, dear, is it lyin' here ye are, as if nothin' were doin'! Get up and fly for the love o' Heaven. Ochone! ochone! It's small chance ye'll have anyhow."

"Fly where? From what?" cried Mrs. Clare, her indignation at the intrusion lost in astonishment, as the other, having deposited her bundle on the bed, almost lifted her on to her feet.

"From murther and slaughterin' an' worse a million times to the like o' you an' me!" Mary cried, her rough hands busy in thrusting Mrs. Clare's little bare feet into a pair of shoes, and flinging a dark cloak, which happened to come handy, over her muslin wrapper. "Shure an' aren't the Sepoy divils afther enterin' the depot, an' our soldiers drugged aforehand, and no shot fired to stay them! Hark to thim, dear! There's a cry! Och! hurry, hurry, as ye're a livin' woman. There'll not be wan alive an hour hince, nor we aither if we're not gone from here!"

"The Sepoys here?" stammered Mrs. Clare. "Do you mean our battalion has risen?"

"An' have let in a couple of hundhred more at laste. Misthress dear, for God's sake don't stan' there. There was wan of ours as wasn't drugged, Sergeant McCann he was, an' the thing I stumbled over at the gate was the dead body of him hacked thro' and thro'. Shure, an' I turned straight roun' an' niver stayed till I got here; for I knew 'twas in yer bed ye were, an' none to purtect ye."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Clare faintly, and very pale, but still holding back, "but go yourself, I could not run or walk either far; and Captain Clare will be back in a few hours now, if he be alive, and if not, I—I would rather die here."

"*Die*, is it," cried Mary contemptuously, "and d'ye think *I* would be afther fearin' death, if that was all? Or d'ye think it's betther for the captain to fin' ye a slave to the black haythens, and yer child's brains dashed out on the stones, as they did wid the childher at Meerut? Missis, I'm flyin' for Jim's sake an' me boy's here, an' I'm not goin' widout you; for the captain's been good an' kind to Jim. Come, ma'am, hurry! Ye'll walk betther yersel' than if ye were tied to a gun an' driven. Here, take hould o' that shawl

while I rowl the childher together. I'll carry them, an' you kape close to me, and don't spake above yer breath. This way,—so!"

The will of the Irish girl was paramount to-day, and the lady followed, with the meekness of a child, in her footsteps.

The eastern sky was red as blood from the blazing roof of her own house in the officers' quarters; and in that scarlet light Mrs. Clare could see the hillside and the walls of the cantonment dotted over with black figures, while the whole air seemed alive and quivering with a turmoil of shrieks, cries, and yells of agony or triumph.

One look was sufficient, and then, as the whole history of their successful treachery burst on her mind, Gertrude Clare cowered closer to the side of the Irish girl whose very existence she had hitherto so loftily ignored, and clung to her murmuring: "We shall never escape! What hope is there for us?"

"Lave hould an' foller me, or it'll be thrue for ye," Mary muttered in curt response, as she dived into a dense thicket of prickly pear and jungle grass, tramping a path in front with her strong feet, and leaving many a fragment of her ragged garments, many a streak of blood on the thorny boughs, yet never suffering a touch to disturb the sturdy, brown-skinned eight-months baby, or the tiny infant of scarce twice as many days, which she carried so tenderly on her right arm.

On and on, tearing their feet and hands, stooping their heads low, praying inwardly the whole time, they struggled on for half-an-hour, treading their way at random through the scrub, only trying for the time to put so much more space between them and their foes; on and on, the Irish girl walking with the firm, elastic tread of one well used to the march, the English one staggering after with a step momentarily slacker and more uncertain, until they reached the outskirts of the wood, and found themselves on the edge of a large field of Indian corn, covering the summit of the low hill where they stood. Then, as Mary stooped lower with

her burden, that her head might not show above the tall green stalks through which she was about to make her way, Mrs. Clare gasped out:

"Go on. Save yourself. I can do no more," and, sinking down, fainted away at her humble friend's feet. At the same moment the latter's baby, awakened by the sudden shock of the falling body, set up a piteous wail.

Half beside herself, Mary crouched down, hushing her baby to her breast with one hand, while with the other she loosened the fainting woman's dress, and turned her face upward that the night air might refresh her.

She could do no more. There was not a drop of water near to moisten the lips already black and parched, but after a brief while, when her child, being fed and soothed, had fallen asleep again, she laid both babes down by Mrs. Clare and crept on hands and knees to a little eminence, where she could have a view of their surroundings.

Poor Gertrude! she was roused from her merciful stupor by something sharp and stinging, and, opening her eyes, saw Mary leaning over with a branch of some thorny plant in her hand; but not even the seemingly cruel method of her revival recalled her so much as the look of horror on the girl's face.

"Foller me—so!" the latter whispered, and crawling behind her, Gertrude came to a point where, peeping through the sheltering stack of the Indian corn, they could see the valley beneath. They were not more than half-a-mile, as the bee flies, from the mosque. It lay just below them, its white domes gleaming out of the tufts of palms, like a globe of frosted silver in the moonbeams. Mary pointed to it silently, and Gertrude felt her blood grow chill within her veins, as she saw five armed figures, their black faces and white turbans plainly discernible in the pure white light, as they stole through the garden to the door from which the two women had so recently escaped.

"Hark!" Mary whispered, and even with the words

there came to them upon the wind the faint cry of baffled rage, as the murderers found that their prey had escaped. The next moment they came rushing out into the garden again, beating about in search of their victim; Mary's hand closed on her companion.

"If they find our thrack, an' come shtraight afther us, they'll be ten minutes gittin' here," she said huskily, "an' if we're not gone—Missis dear, I only ax ye to run ten minutes more. If we can but get through this field an' down on the other side toward the river, I know where we can hide, an' they'll not be follerin' fur fear o' bein' cut off by our men. Only kape up yer heart for the love o' God, an' thry."

"I will do my best," answered Mrs. Clare, "but if I drop, leave me. It will not be your fault, and I shall not suffer long."

Mary said nothing, but squeezed the slim, white hand in her brown and horny one, and then, only waiting to lift the mercifully sleeping children, they resumed their flight.

But before they had reached the further extremity of the corn-field, Mrs. Clare had thrice stumbled, and Mary stopped of her own accord, warned by the long-drawn, gasping breath that her companion's strength had well nigh come to an end. A new idea seized her, and, taking off her cloak, she succeeded in strapping the infants on to her back; then making Mrs. Clare take her arm, led her on, cheering the sinking woman every now and then with an encouraging whisper.

It was down-hill now, but every step was a stumble, every breath a prayer, and they had gained such a little distance.

Suddenly Mrs. Clare reeled, and the hold on Mary's arm gave way. The red spots on her cheeks had died out, and a mortal pallor was there instead.

"Mary," she said, every breath coming with a moan, "leave me now—I command it. You've done your best—God bless you—go, take your child, and give me mine. It could not live long without me, and I can go no further, not one step."

And looking in her face, Mary Kirwan saw it was true. What was to be done? For a moment she stood still and mute, then a scarlet color rushed into her cheeks, and she fell on her knees. "Oh! Lord Christ, I see a way, but it's hard, hard. Help me to do it; for there's no other at all."

It was a moment's prayer, and no sooner uttered than she rose, undid the children from her back, handed Mrs. Clare her own, and tenderly wrapping up the other in her cloak, darted away with it among the corn stalks without a word.

When she came back, her arms were empty, and her face was white as death.

"Mary!" cried the English mother, "where is it? What have you done with it—your child?"

"I've put it down," her lips quivering as she raised the other. "Maybe they'll not be afther seein' him (for it's in a hole he is among the corn) widout he cries, an' he'll not do that, the darlin', when I've nursed him but the now, an' wrapped him up warm to slape."

"But Mary,—my God! What do you mean?"

"Mane! shure, that I can't carry you and the childher too," said Mary simply, "an' it's thrue, ye *can't* walk any further. Och! don't be talkin', but hould yer own tight while I lift ye. Shure it's not the feather-weight ye are. Don't be talkin', I say," checking with an almost fierce authority the resistance which Mrs. Clare would fain have offered as she was lifted from the ground. "But iv yer never axed the Mother o' God to pray for ye an' yours, as you're a mother yersel', ax her now for me."

And on she strode as she spoke, walking far more swiftly now under her burden than when she had to accommodate her steps to the fragile creature behind her; though now and then a sob broke from her bosom, rending the heart of the prostrate woman she carried.

Yet it was not the weight which distressed her. It was the mother's heart in her, fighting and breaking for that sturdy, brown-skinned infant, whom every step put farther and farther away from her, and still she

hurried on more swiftly for the agony in her mind, sometimes running, sometimes stumbling, sometimes nearly falling, never daring to pause, or lift her head once for a single breath.

Mary felt sure that, could she only reach a shelter she knew of, namely, an ancient tomb half hidden among jungle and creepers in a thicket near the river, and which, though once often used as a sleeping place by tramps, fakirs and smugglers, had by some accident, mysteriously significant to the natives, become unclean, and had been shunned henceforth as an accursed and polluted spot by Mohammedan and Brahmin alike, they might safely hide there till the return of the regiment from Susi.

And she did. As the eastern sky flushed into a delicate rose-color, tinting earth and cloud with an ineffable, opaline glory, her sore and weary feet stumbled heavily into the thicket of which she had been in search, and dropped upon the damp earth within, with a cry of thankfulness, half inaudible from fatigue.

They were safe.

And Mrs. Clare, rising to her knees, took the brown hands, to which she owed her life, in her little fingers, covering them with tears and kisses as again and again she poured thanks and blessings on her preserver. Mary checked her.

"Whist! Not a word above yer breath! Shure it's scarce a hundred yards we are from the road, an' I'm hearin' something passin' the now."

Men's voices were indeed audible, laughing and talking loudly along the road. There might have been half-a-dozen by the noise, but whether they were deserters, or only coolies on their way to labor, the women could not tell, as they cowered in the inmost recesses of their sanctuary, not even venturing for the next half-hour to creep out to drink at a little muddy pool among the reeds, though their lips and throats were so parched and swollen by this time that during the period of waiting they had hardly been able even to whisper a word to one another.

Mrs. Clare, with great discretion, drank sparingly, and would fain have coaxed Mary to do the same; but the latter plunged her hot face deep into the water, swallowing it in gulps, and only replying when she had slaked her thirst to the full.

"Lave me alone. It's got to last me till I get back."

"Back! where?" Mrs. Clare asked, but was abashed by the reply.

"Shure, an' is it lave me child for good I'd be doin'?"

Gertrude burst into tears. Her long fainting fit had confused her, and she now reproached herself bitterly.

"Ah! how could I let you! And you whom I've often looked down on! Why didn't you leave me instead?"

"You're a woman yersel'," said Mary gently. "An' could *you* be afther lavin' a feller-woman now to the marcy o' thim black divils? As to the boy, acushla"—her plain features working unrestrainedly with the sorrow she tried not to express in words,—"wasn't it betther to lave him awhile, an' he slaping like an angel in me ould cloak, that's for all the world the color o' the groun'? Shure, I tuk him to the font meself afore iver we left Calcutta, as is more than iver ye've been afther doin' for yours, I'll be bound, the purty, wee craythur! So I'd the clane right to say to Our Blessed Lord: It's You he belongs to now, so take care of him till I'm comin' back, for it's meself is takin' care of a poor unbelavin' sowl for You, I said, an' where would that be ef I didn't?"

"But Mary, Mary dear," cried Mrs. Clare, weeping more freely for the girl's simplicity and confidence. "Don't go *now*. It will be only throwing away your own life, and if they have discovered him—oh! please God, they have not!—it will be too late, too late to save. Don't, Mary! The Sixth will be here a few hours hence, and then we will go back together under good guard and search for him, and he shall never want for anything again if I can help it, or you either. Only stay!"

But Mary shook her rough head doggedly.

"I could thrust Him above to help me when I was thryin' to help Him," she said, "but ef 'twas carin' for meself I was—an' shure anyhow is it I could sit here an' me purty, bright-eyed boy, Jim's one bairn, tugging at me heart-strings a' the while?"

And yet it was with a stern, beautiful patience that she delayed another ten minutes to feed Mrs. Clare's tiny infant which had wakened, crying with a hunger which was no longer warded off by rapid movement, and which its poor young mother had no power to relieve. Then, her work of charity completed, the private's wife gave the babe back to its mother, and cautioning the latter to keep well within shelter till she saw relief at hand, and undaunted by the growing heat of the sun, her terrible fatigue, and bleeding feet, untroubled even by the almost certain prospect of discovery, she sallied forth on the return search for her child.

Left alone, the hours passed wearily with the officer's wife. She was worn out with fatigue and agitation. She was faint with hunger, and, do what she would, her child wailed and fretted.

The hours wore on. The sun rose higher and higher, till the low entrance to the ruin glowed like a yellow mouth of a furnace. The child, tired with crying, fell asleep again; and she herself was resting in a sort of half-slumber of exhaustion, when a noise from without startled her into a sitting position, her heart sick with terror. There was a tramp of horses' feet, and the regular tramp of many men coming up the road.

Was it the Sixth? Or was it the party of mutineers which had separated from their fellows?

If it were the former, and she remained in her hiding-place, they might pass on, and leave her to perish of hunger and weakness. If the latter, and she were to show herself, God only could foresee her fate in its full horror. And the tramp, tramp, came nearer and nearer. She could hear the murmur of voices, and catch now and then the gleam of arms among the trees which hid the ruin.

The suspense became intolerable. Laying her child gently in a dark corner, she crawled to the entrance and looked out. A body of troops were passing, had almost passed. She could see the scarlet uniforms of the Sixth, and the Scotch caps and gray jackets of Captain Donaldson's men. She could almost hear the words of the soldiers, as at quick march and in double file they passed along, their sternly vengeful faces telling of the work they had been doing, the work they were about to do, and yet, when she tried to call to them, her tongue clove to her mouth, a mist rose before her eyes, and with a faint cry she sank, face foremost, on the ground.

When she recovered, she was in her husband's arms, and his grateful tears were on her face. Little did that young officer, who had heard of the attack on Futterhabad and the wholesale massacre, expect to see his wife alive and safe. The Sixth had indeed met and defeated the party of which they were in search, with more ease than they had expected, and were in consequence returning rather earlier, when met *en route* by the body of mutineers dispatched for that purpose, and who, by first harassing and then leading them in pursuit, had without the loss of more than two or three men contrived to delay them two good hours on their way.

. . . . . .

But what of Mary?

No one can tell what she endured in her return search for her child. It was then in the last week of May, and the heat at eight o'clock was so intense that it seemed to frizzle the brains in her uncovered head. She had lost a shoe, and her feet were cut and swollen. Her head felt swollen too, and her eyes dim and distended. It was the effect of the too hearty drink in the hot sun and of the want of food, which was besides making her sick and giddy; and as the sun grew hotter and hotter, a species of delirium seemed to seize her. She saw before her a crowd of Sepoys with inflamed eyes and dark ferocious faces, and in the midst of them her baby held on high by one of the miscreants, in the act

of dashing its brains out upon the ground. She shrieked aloud in her agony, darted wildly forward, stumbled, fell headlong to the ground, staggered to her feet again; and lo! the Sepoys were gone, and instead her child was wailing, wailing, somewhere in front of her. Yes, she saw it now distinctly, wrapped in the cloak as she had left it among the corn-stalks, and near it, crouching for the spring, a huge Bengal tiger. Again she screamed and sprang forward, throwing out her arms wildly to scare the animal, and again the horrible vision vanished, only to be renewed a thousand times in a thousand different forms.

Once she met a gentle-looking Parsee face to face, who stopped her and gave her some "chuppatties" (coarse meal cakes) and a drink of sour milk, and warned her earnestly against returning to the town, signifying, by gestures as well as by words, the fate which had befallen her friends there. She ate and drank ravenously of what he gave; but only shook her head at his advice and hastened on. The Parsee went his way, shaking his head. Evidently the poor woman had been driven mad by the slaughter of those belonging to her, and he should only embarrass and compromise himself by trying to detain her.

And then at last, all at once, the weight rolled off her brain, and the red mist from before her eyes. She was on her knees in the maize-field, and in front of her was the very hole where she had laid her infant with the rusty plaid cloak crumpled on the edge of it.

But the child?

For a moment an awful despair seized her, and a cry broke from her lips, so shrill and unearthly that it scared away a couple of vultures who were hovering low over something a yard or two distant. A little cooing, gurgling note of pleasure answered, and turning, she saw a round, rosy face among the corn-stalks, and a pair of fat hands, and naked, dimpled feet trying, by stretching and crawling, to get at the mother who had left it.

When Captain Clare, accompanied by four of his

men, entered the same field in search of his wife's preserver, they found Mary quietly seated on the ground, nursing her baby, and the ringing cheer which greeted the sight might have shown her how her heroism was appreciated by those brave, rugged hearts. She hardly heeded it; but just stood up, dropping her courtesy to the officer, and then looked round at the others.

"An' where's my Jim at all?"

There was no immediate answer. The men did not seem to hear, and Captain Clare began thanking her in an agitated way for all that she had done, and urging her to hasten with him to the carriage at the foot of the hill, where Mrs. Clare was waiting for her, which was to take them both under a strong guard to Susi and thence as soon as possible to Calcutta. Mary courtesied again.

"Thank ye, sir. It's very good ye are to me; but I'm not wantin' to lave me husband, though it's not 'on the strength' I am. Shure, I'll go down to him the now, since he's no mind to come up to me. May be, though, he's not got lave to fall out o' the ranks for that."

The last words were said piteously, her eager, excited blue eyes lifted to the officer's kindly face. Very gently he took her arm.

"Come to the carriage first, Mary, any way. Mrs. Clare wants to—to speak to you. My good girl, my brave girl, you're not going to give way now!"

"Is it *kilt* he is?" she asked hoarsely; and then, before any reply could be given save the mute answer of the eyes, the child fell from her arms, she reeled suddenly, and dropped, a senseless, crumpled heap, at the commander's feet.

When Mary recovered from the shock occasioned by her husband's death, she accompanied Mrs. Clare to England, and was ever after her constant companion. The two boys became fast friends, and when young Kyle—Mary's boy—grew to man's estate, Mrs. Clare had him established in a small business, for, as she said, "she could never do enough for the son of the woman who had so generously saved her life."

Ikku Kawara, a native Japanese, has turned the legend, "Doka's Judgment," into what he considers to be correct and expressive English, for the readers of ROMANCE. Miss Mary M. Scott, who forwards the translation, remarks that this is the only sacred Japanese story which at all resembles our own Hebrew Bible, but this, even in the Japanese "pigeon English" of Kawara, will at once suggest the similar incident in the life of Solomon.

DOKA'S JUDGMENT.

UNDER the rule of Tokugawa Iyemitsu, third Shogun of the house of Tokugawa, there were the most famous judge, named Doka.

He adjudged many contest in a simple way, judging about natural passion.

Although it is very rude to compare it with those advanced state of laws which now proceeds in present time, it were absolutely necessary in that age.

In one occasion there arisen a contest between two woman, which proposed themself as true mother of a child two years old; for the mother and her child were separated long time ago by some sad accident.

Doka almost knew, by their protestations, which of them was the true mother.

He listened in a majestic manner, with the end of securing some more obvious witness, then taking the child, bore into next room, closing the shoji (sliding panels) after.

He returned, bringing large cloth bundle which moved violently, and said, "As I cannot judge whether the child belongs to one of you, I enveloped him with some coverings, as you see in my side, and will throw him into pond in the garden. It is better that one child drowned than two large woman do the quarreling."

He stepped out and threw the bundle down to the pond. It rambled to and fro, bubbling and bubbling. What a wonderful sight for the affectionate mother!

Indeed, the enveloped thing was a large living fish,

about the size of a child, and not the body of the child. But all the court believed it as the body of the child except the judge himself.

As for the true mother, she became zealous with the anxiety to lose her only child, and after making a keenest cry, she plunged into the cold water, grasped the envelope, and brought it to shore, while other was glued to her seat, because water was too cold, or was not much cared whether the child would be drown, for she was a mummed mother.

Now Doka made some signal. The child brought out from his hidden place, and clasped to his mother's breast.

Now Doka explained his true project, and said to the wetted true mother, "As it is obvious that the child is in reality yours, you may accompany him to your home."

How she thanked him for a thousand times!

Soon she received honorable reward from the Shogun, but the mummed mother was severely punished.

Nervous people would do well to skip this very "creepy" story by Guy de Maupassant (translated for ROMANCE by Frank R. Barnard). The sketch is, however, too powerful, and possesses too weighty a pathological significance to be lightly passed over. Its interest at just this time is enhanced by the fact that M. de Maupassant's malady has taken on the form of fear. He constantly imagines that something behind him is about to seize and strangle him. No doubt the suggestions of this story were the first beginnings of the awful disease which has unseated his marvellous intellect.

"IT."

My dear friend, do you not understand? And yet I can readily believe it. You think I have gone mad. It may be that I am a little unsettled in my mind, but not in the way that you suppose.

Yes, I am to be married. That is all.

I may add that I am scarcely acquainted with her who will be my wife to-morrow. I have met her but four or five times. She is not at all unpleasing to me. She is short, stout, and blonde. She is not rich. In fact, she is just such a young girl as you may find by the hundred in the middle-class families, without any remarkable qualities, one way or the other.

"Then why should I marry," you ask?

I marry in order that I may not be alone!

I do not know how to put it so that you may comprehend it. I scarcely comprehend it myself. And then you will pity me and despise me in just so far as the condition of my mind is miserable.

I cannot bear to be alone. I must feel some one near me, some one who can talk, who can say something, no matter what it be, because—because—(I cannot admit it without shame)—because I am afraid when alone.

Oh, I see that still you do not understand me. I am not afraid of a danger which is seen and understood. If a burglar should enter, I could kill him without flinching. I am not afraid of ghosts. I have no fear

of the supernatural, for I believe in the utter annihilation of every being who disappears.

Then—yes. Then—oh, well, I am afraid of myself. I am afraid of being afraid, afraid of the paroxysms of my mind, which is losing control of itself, afraid of that horrible sensation of unreasoning terror.

Laugh if you will. But it is frightful, and incurable. I am afraid of the walls, of the furniture, of familiar objects, which take on to my disordered vision a sort of animal life. I am afraid, above all, of the dreadful confusion of my thoughts, afraid that my reason is deserting me, overwhelmed and maddened by a mysterious and intangible fear.

At first, I feel a vague inquietude passing through my mind, while a shudder runs over my body. I look all around. Nothing! And yet I would rather see something. What? Something comprehensible; for I am afraid solely because I do not understand my fear.

I speak! I am afraid of the sound of my own voice. I walk! I am afraid of the unknown presence behind the door, behind the curtain, inside the closet, under the bed. And yet I know that there is nothing anywhere. I turn suddenly, because I fear what is behind me, even though there be nothing there, and I know it.

I become agitated. I feel my agitation increase. I lock myself into my room. I bury myself in my bed, I hide myself under the clothes, and crouching there, trembling, rolled up like a ball, I close my eyes desperately, and remain thus for an indefinite length of time, with the knowledge that my candle is still burning on the table, and that I ought to rise and blow it out. And yet I do not dare. Is it not frightful to be in such a condition?

Formerly I never felt so. I used to go home tranquilly. I came and went about my apartments with nothing to disturb the serenity of my soul. If any one had told me that some malady of fear, unreal, foolish and yet terrible, would seize on me one day, I should have laughed him to scorn. I used to open doors in the darkness with assurance: I went to bed slowly and

without bolting myself in, and I never got up in the middle of the night to make sure that all the doors of the room were tightly closed.

My terror originated last year in a singular fashion. It was on one damp night in autumn. When my servant had left after dinner, I asked myself what I should do. I walked up and down my room for a while. I felt weary, dejected without cause, unable to work, or even to read. A fine rain was beating against the panes. I was sad, overpowered by one of those fits of melancholy which make one feel like crying, which make one want to talk with some one else, with any one who can lighten the dreariness.

I felt deserted; my rooms seemed to me empty and cheerless as they never had seemed before. An infinite and heart-rending solitude surrounded me. What should I do? I sat down. Then a nervous impatience took possession of me. I got up again, and began to wander about aimlessly. Perhaps I was slightly feverish, for my hands, which I held clasped behind my back as one often does when walking slowly, were burning, and I noticed it at the time. Then all at once a chill ran down my back. I thought that the dampness outside had entered the house and that I had better make a fire. I did so; it was the first time that season. I sat down again, idly watching the flames. But soon the impossibility of keeping quiet caused me to rise, and I felt that I must arouse myself, must go out, and find a friend.

I went out. I called on three acquaintances, none of whom were at home; then I reached the boulevard, determined to meet some one I knew.

It was depressing weather. The wet pavements glistened in the lamp-light. A damp rawness, such as freezes one by sudden chills, a heavy coldness, filled the street and seemed to stifle the gas-flames.

I went on at a moderate gait, repeating disconsolately to myself, "I shall find no one with whom to talk."

I entered several of the cafés, from the Madeleine to the Faubourg of Poissonière. Gloomy-looking people,

seated at the tables, did not seem to have vitality enough to finish their drinks.

I wandered thus for some time, and then turned homeward. I was very calm, but very weary. The janitor of my flat, who usually retired before eleven, opened the street door for me at once, contrary to his custom, and I thought, "Oh, well, another tenant has doubtless just gone upstairs."

When I leave my rooms, I always lock the outer door. I found it only latched, and that startled me. I supposed, however, that some one had brought a letter for me during the evening.

I entered. My fire was not out yet, and faintly illumined the room. I took a candle to light at the hearth, when, glancing around, I perceived a man seated in my arm-chair, warming his feet, with his back toward me.

I was not afraid; oh no, not in the least. A very plausible idea entered my head—that one of my friends had come to see me. The janitor, informed by me when I went out, had said that I would soon be back, and had lent his pass-key. And all the circumstances of my return passed through my mind in a second—the street-door opened at once, and my own door unlocked.

My friend, whose hair alone I could see, had gone to sleep before the fire while waiting for me, and I stepped forward to wake him. I saw him perfectly now: one of his arms was hanging at his side; his head, inclined a little toward the left, certainly indicated sleep. I asked myself, "Who is it?" for I could not distinguish his features. I put out my hand to touch his shoulder!—It met the wood of the chair! *There was no one there. The chair was empty.* Great heavens! what a shock!

I started back at first as if a terrible danger had appeared before me.

Then I turned, feeling that some one was behind me; then at once an imperious necessity to look again at the arm-chair made me wheel around once more. And so I remained standing, ready to fall, gasping with terror, and so completely unnerved that I could not even think.

But I am a self-possessed man, and soon my reason returned. I thought, "I have been the victim of an hallucination; that is all." And I immediately began to reflect upon the thing. Ideas come quickly at such times.

I had had an hallucination; that was an undoubted fact. Now, my mind had been all the time perfectly clear, acting regularly and logically. My brain was therefore in its normal condition. My eyes alone had been deceived, and they in turn had deceived my mind. My eyes had perceived a vision, one of those visions which cause ignorant people to believe in miracles. It was an optical illusion, nothing more, caused, perhaps, by a slight congestion.

I lit my candle. I noticed, while stooping toward the fire, that I was trembling, and I rose with a start, as if some one had touched me from behind. Certainly I was not at all calm as yet.

I took several steps. I spoke aloud. I sang in an undertone several refrains.

Then I locked the door of my room and felt a little reassured. No one could enter now, at any rate.

I sat down and pondered for some time over my adventure; then I went to bed and blew out the light.

For some minutes all went well. Then I felt that I must look around the room, and I raised myself on my elbow.

There was nothing left of the fire save two or three glowing coals, which showed just the feet of the arm-chair; and I thought I again saw the man sitting there.

With a rapid movement, I lit a match. I had been mistaken. I saw nothing at all.

I got up, however, and hid the chair behind my bed.

Then I made all dark again and tried to sleep. I had not lost consciousness five minutes before, in a dream, I saw, as vividly as in reality, all the scenes of the evening. I awoke from the fright, and having lighted the candle, I remained seated in bed, not daring to go to sleep again. Twice, however, slumber over-

took me, despite myself, for a few seconds. Each time I saw the thing again. I thought I had gone mad.

When day dawned, I felt cured, and slept quietly till noon.

It was over, all over. I had had a touch of fever, the nightmare, what you will. In short, I had been ill. I thought myself, nevertheless, extremely foolish.

I was very gay that day. I dined at a restaurant; I went to the play, and then I started to return to my rooms. But as I approached the house, a strange inquietude seized me. I was afraid of seeing It again. Not afraid of It, not afraid of Its presence, in which I did not at all believe. I was afraid of more trouble with my eyes, afraid of the hallucination, afraid of the terror which would overpower me.

For more than an hour I strayed about the streets; then, at last, I felt so much ashamed that I entered the house. I was gasping for breath so that I could scarcely ascend the stairs. I remained for ten minutes on the mat before my apartments; then suddenly I had an access of courage, an increase of will-power. I unlocked the outer door; I rushed in, candle in hand; I kicked open the half-ajar inner door of my room; and I cast a frightened glance toward the fire-place. I saw nothing—ah!—

What relief! What joy! What deliverance! I walked to and fro in ecstasy. But yet I did not feel entirely reassured. I turned around suddenly sometimes; the darkness in the corners disquieted me.

I slept badly, awakened time after time by imaginary noises. But I did not see It. No, It had disappeared forever.

From that day I have been afraid when alone at night. I feel It there, near me, around me,—that vision. It has not appeared to me again. Oh no! And what matters this, anyway, since I do not believe in It, since I know that It does not really exist?

It annoys me, nevertheless, because I think of It constantly. One hand was hanging at Its side; Its head was inclined to the left, like that of a man who

sleeps. But enough of this! I will dream no more of it.

Still what is this besetment? Why am I so persistently annoyed by It?—Its feet were very near the fire!

It haunts me;—a foolish fancy, but a real one. What, It? I know indeed that It does not exist, that It has no being. It lives only in my apprehension, in my fear, in my anguish. But I must dismiss the matter from my mind!

Yes, but I have tried in vain to reason with myself, to take courage. I cannot remain alone at home, because It is there. I shall not see It. I know It will not show Itself again; that is all over. But It is there, just the same, in my thoughts. It remains invisible, but It is there, nevertheless. It is behind the doors, in the closet, under the bed, in all the dark corners, in all the shadows. If I turn my head, if I open the closet, if I cast my light under the bed, if I illuminate the corners and the shadows, It is there no longer; but then I feel It behind me. I turn again, certain, however, that I shall not see It, that I shall never see It. It is none the less behind me still.

It is stupid, but yet It is horrible. What would you have? I cannot help myself.

But if there were two at home I feel, yes, I assuredly feel that It would be there no longer. For It is there because I am alone,—only because I am alone!

The newspaper-office story is recognized as not only one of the newest but one of the most interesting varieties of narrative. Mr. Arthur James Pegler has written for ROMANCE the following stirring account of a newspaper "beat," which never got into print.

AN UNPUBLISHED SENSATION.

"STEP into my private office when you are at liberty, Mr. Bennett."

The request was made in terse, authoritative tones, familiar enough to every man in the editorial department of the paper as those of Mr. Priest, the managing editor—an undersized, fussy little chap, with hair prematurely gray, tiny sharp eyes, like a ferret's, and enormous ears that seemed designed by nature to catch all the news there was adrift. The latter organs he had a peculiar fashion of moving backward and forward when excited or interested—a mulish mannerism which had earned him various more or less appropriate nicknames.

"Yes, sir," answered Bennett, looking up from the preparation of an article on the superlative greatness, past, present, and future, of Kansas City. "Be there in five minutes," he added, and then *sotto voce*—"wonder what the deuce is up now. Some idiot's been complaining about a report, of course." With this reflection the young man resumed his laudatory screed on the advantages of Kansas City, commercially, socially, and generally. At last the column of fiction, upon which he had expended a good deal of energy, was handed over to the city editor with the remark, "Here's that rot about the town." An instant later Bennett had disappeared down the passage to confer with his chief.

"Wonder what Priest wants with him," said Godfrey, one of the stars of the staff, who had acquired local fame by virtue of a series of "beats" during his four months of service with the paper.

"May be going to do tardy justice, and raise his salary," said O'Dell, the court man, cynically. "Bennett's been doing all the fancy work since poor Durnald quit, and he ought to get Durnald's salary, but he doesn't."

"Did you see Priest's ears?" asked little Davis, the junior member of the staff. "They stood straight out," went on the youngster, "and there's something in the air sure."

At this moment a messenger entered to inform Godfrey that he too was wanted in the managerial sanctum, whereat garrulous little Davis at once urged the correctness of his surmise, that an unusual "something" was transpiring behind the figured glass doors of the editorial room.

"Sit down, Bennett," snapped the editor, as the former entered. Priest was a type. One of a class of men who seem to find their way into positions of influence and authority on newspapers without difficulty. He was not a writer, and in fact could hardly construct a sentence correctly. He lacked most of the elements naturally supposed indispensable to success in such a place, but Priest had other qualifications, added to a good nose for news, which appealed more strongly to the stockholders of the paper. Chief among them was his ability to play into the hands of the business office, hold down writers' salaries to the minimum, and curtail the expenses of his department generally. There were literary brains enough to be got for a very little money, clever writers on any and all topics of the day but men of the Priest pattern were scarcer.

The air of the managing editor, as he motioned Bennett to a seat, was preoccupied. He was always preoccupied when spoken to or approached by any but the business manager. Then he was obsequious. His manner now said, as plainly as words could have said it, "You are my subordinate, and must be duly impressed with the dignity of my position." After gazing for some moments, in an attitude of deep thought,

at a social item of utter unimportance, which had slipped in among his correspondence by mistake, Mr. Priest dropped the little slip of paper into his capacious waste-basket, swung round in his swing-chair, and faced Jack Bennett.

"Mr. Bennett," he jerked, "I'm going to detail you on an important piece of work."

"Yes, sir," replied Bennett, with a becoming show of interest.

"You know, Mr. Bennett," continued the chief, "all the main facts regarding the counterfeit five-dollar bills which have flooded the city during the last few months."

"I believe I am tolerably familiar with the matter, sir," was the reply.

"The fact is, Bennett," and the little man's ears began to oscillate with increasing rapidity—"the fact is, that every detective in the city has worked on this case for weeks at a time. They have all failed, and the search has been practically abandoned. The police acknowledge themselves beaten, Bennett." The editor brought his hand down on the arm of the chair with an emphatic thump. "Now then," and the ferret-eyed little man leaned forward as though to add weight to his words, "I have always held that a good reporter is the best detective in the world. You have done some very good work for the paper, Bennett—very good indeed. You will take this case. Devote your whole time to it, follow up every conceivable clue, run these fellows to earth and—well, if you succeed, it will make a difference in your salary.

"You will take any other man off the local staff you may desire to assist you," went on the editor, before Bennett had time to reply. "I should suggest Godfrey. He's a bright fellow, quite up to the work, I should think."

"I think Godfrey is the right man, sir," answered Bennett. Godfrey entered a moment later in response to a summons by telephone. The nature of the business on which he had been detailed was explained, and

then both men were dismissed with the injunction to do their best.

The task set these two reporters was by no means an easy one. Detectives, and reputedly smart ones, had worked on the counterfeiting case for months, but as the editor said, no clue, however faint, had been found to the makers of the base five-dollar notes.

A week after he had been detailed on the matter, Jack Bennett sat lounging in an arm-chair at his rooms, examining one of the spurious bills for the hundredth time. He had just succeeded in running down, with the aid of Godfrey, a clue which the latter had suggested, but which, like a dozen other supposed clues, had proven false. A week is a long time in a newspaper office, and Bennett was beginning to chafe at his lack of success in finding a single thread to work on.

"A bad beginning," he mused. "A deuced bad beginning."

Taking the cigar from his lips, he again examined the counterfeit minutely. It was almost perfect. A slight difference, perhaps, in the texture of the paper between this and the genuine bill, but the lettering was clear and exact, the ink black and the printing without a flaw. None but an expert could have discerned the fraud.

Then Bennett fell to thinking of certain difficulties he had encountered in this investigation, which had so far proved profitless. Sometimes he had thought Godfrey was jealous of the precedence given another on the case; sometimes his assistance and suggestions seemed half-hearted. Still, there were times when he was feverishly anxious to hunt down a newly-discovered clue. There was no doubt of the man's ability. Godfrey had worked up two or three affairs single-handed, in a manner that proved him a thoroughly capable man—and yet, there was something about his efforts to run down these counterfeiters that seemed but half sincere.

Little was known of Godfrey on the paper. He floated in on the boom tide, just when a good man was badly needed. Jim Durnald, one of the best men Kansas City ever saw, had succumbed to the effects of six years' continuous work in the same chair, and was, at the time of Godfrey's advent, a hopeless victim of paresis in a sanitarium, somewhere in the central part of the State. The poor fellow imagined he had purchased a controlling interest in the stock of two railroads and a steamship-company. Of course, every one was sorry for Durnald, but in a newspaper-office there is very little room for sentiment. Jim was "out of the running," and it was necessary to get a man in his place at once. When Godfrey applied for the job, Fawcett, the city editor, put him on, and it took but a few days to demonstrate that a first-rate all-round man had been secured.

Bennett thought over his associations with the new man, and could find no real reason for complaint. Mentally resolving, however, to adopt a new line of research on the following day, he was about to retire, when a knock on the door startled him. It was the sharp rapping of some one in a hurry.

"Jack, say, Jack!!" Bennett recognized the voice as that of young Davis. "Get up and let me in, old chap," went on the outsider.

Bennett walked over, turned the key, and threw the door open. "Why, Davis!" he exclaimed, "what's the row. You look as though you had seen a ghost," for the junior member of the staff was very pale and very much excited.

Davis assumed an air which told plainly enough that he had a disclosure to make. The youngster drew up a chair, lighted one of Bennett's cigars, and replied to his friend's query with a question.

"How are you getting on with the case, Bennett?" he inquired coolly.

"What case?"

"Come now, old fellow," went on the youth, "I haven't been in this business as long as you have, but

I have learned enough to pick up a piece of news before I fall over it."

"Well, what have you picked up this time?" asked Bennett, rather disconcerted at the peculiar manner of his young colleague.

Davis pitched his hat in a corner, stuffed both hands deep down into his trousers-pockets, and with an air of quiet assurance, proceeded.

"What I came here for, at this unearthly hour of the night, was to put you on the right track, and help you capture these queer pushers. *You're all wrong*," said the lad, with peculiar emphasis on the last three words.

"Look here, Davis," and Bennett rose to his feet, "what the devil are you driving at?"

"Oh, now, don't treat me like a child," interposed the other indignantly. "I'm on to the whole game. You're working on this counterfeiting story, and Godfrey's working with you—that is, he's supposed to be. Am I right?"

"Suppose you are right," said Bennett, guardedly. "What then?"

"What then!!" cried Davis, sitting bolt upright, "why just what I said before. You're on the wrong lay—clear off the scent, I tell you. Look here, Bennett," he continued in an excited voice, "I've been working on this thing for two months. There's a thousand dollars reward offered for the capture of the gang, don't you see, and what I want is the reward."

Bennett could not repress an amused smile. The vanity of this youngster tickled him immensely, but Davis was a bright sort of little chap, and a fellow couldn't help liking him.

"I've followed up every clue," he went on. "Hundreds of 'em have amounted to nothing, but I tell you, Bennett," and the lad's face flushed with the excitement he felt, "I'm on to the whole deal now. I'd bet my life against a dollar that I can run these fellows to earth in a couple of days."

Bennett was interested now, and he was never wider awake in his life than when, turning sharp round on

his heel, he pushed the excited junior member into a chair, and took up a position before him.

"Out with it now," he said somewhat fiercely. "What do you know?"

The lad shrugged his shoulders as a man will who is sure of his position, and replied calmly, "Turn about's fair play. What do you know?"

"Well," said Bennett, "to be perfectly frank with you, I have discovered nothing. The whole case looks just as blank as it did a week ago, when I was put on it."

"That's what I thought," replied the youth. "Now I'll tell you something. It's not altogether fame I'm after in this thing, Bennett. I need that thousand dollars. Laugh if you like; laugh your head off. The fact remains that, if I had the thousand, I'd get married in less than no time."

"A laudable idea, my boy,—very fine," laughed Bennett. "Er—who is the lady?" he added.

"Dolly Taylor, of Omaha. Sweetest little girl in the world. I've known her all my life, went to high school with her, know all about her, and love her all the more, the more I know of her. There are only two in the family—just Dolly and her mother. There's a brother somewhere, but he's the black sheep of the family—been in some bad scrapes, I'm told, but they never speak of him. The father's dead, you know, and it's a case of highly respectable poverty. Well, to cut it short," concluded the youngster, "that thousand dollars would come in awfully handy, and I never miss a chance, Bennett. Will you help me to carry this thing out? Give me the money, and you take the glory. Will you do it?"

"Yes, yes," replied the other, hastily. "Now tell your story."

"I had better begin with the most important fact," said Davis, deliberately turning over the leaves of his note book. "Here is the entry," he went on. "It is dated just three hours ago. It reads like this—'*Godfrey is the counterfeiter.*'"

"Eh!! Why, what the d—l! By George, you're crazy.

Godfrey, one of the best all-round newspaper men in the West, a member of this gang? Oh, come, Davis, this is all rot—utter idiocy," and Bennett began to pace the floor hastily. "Still," he went, on as though arguing the proposition in his own mind, "I don't know either. There have been one or two queer things——"

He glanced at Davis. That young gentleman had placidly closed his note-book, and was waiting for his friend to calm down.

"Go on with your story," said Bennett.

"It was quite by chance," Davis resumed, "that I got my clue. I was down at Schaefer's place to-night, looking up a piece of news, when there was a row at the bar. A swell-looking chap had tried to ring a flash five on Bill, the bartender. Bill had him by the scruff of the neck and was going to send for the police. The man protested violently that he was all right, and offered a large roll of bills in evidence, but Bill was obdurate, and there would have been a pinch all right if something hadn't turned up in the nick of time. Now what do you think happened?"

"Give it up."

"Just then Godfrey stepped over from one of the billiard-tables, cool as you please; shook hands with the man, swore to the barkeeper that he was all right, and asked Bill as a personal favor not to disgrace him by arrest. You know Godfrey is chums with every detective and patrolman in the town, and Bill knew him well as the police-reporter of our paper. The upshot of the thing was that he just turned the swell loose and apologized. The latter laughed at the adventure, bought drinks for all the loafers, and everybody forgot it. What impressed me was the expression of the man's face. You never in your life saw an innocent man go as white. I kept my eye on the chap, and pretty soon he got over to the table where Godfrey was still playing billiards. They had a brief talk, and as soon as the game was over, Godfrey went out alone. There was a big crowd in the place, and he had not seen me. I had a mind at first to follow him, but on

second thoughts determined to shadow the other fellow. In a few moments he went out, too. I was on the other side of the street in a jiffy. He went through the front door of Harper's place on Topeka Street, and I was after him like a shot. As I entered the front, he disappeared through the back-door into the alley. There was no one watching, and like a flash I seized the nigger's coat from the wall, threw it over my shoulders and walked out into the alley. My hat was pulled over my eyes, and even Dolly would not have known me."

"Well?" asked Bennett, who was now visibly agitated.

"Well, I found 'em there. They were talking in the shadow of the building, and of course I did not dare stop. My object was to find them together. That settled the thing in my mind, but I followed farther to make sure. *I've tracked them to Godfrey's room*, and now I know enough to justify a raid."

"You confounded young 'un!" gasped the excited Bennett, "I believe you're smarter than the lot of us. Hang me," he added, "if I don't believe you're right."

"Right!!!" exclaimed the youth, in a sort of shriek. "Of course I'm right. Why, man, don't you see the game—Godfrey's, I mean? He's a crack o' jack at the business. Knows something about newspaper-work, makes application for a job and gets the very run he most wants—*police*. He works hard, is a good writer, gets in with all the detectives and patrolmen, and knows just about what they are all doing. Why, he even travelled round with them, working on this very case. Right!" added the excited young sleuth, panting for breath. "Why, it's the greatest graft on earth, and the grafter, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion."

"When would you suggest making the arrest?" asked Bennett.

"Godfrey will be alone in the room after midnight. We must manage it alone, us two. If the police make the capture, we shall lose both the credit and the reward. The room is number 20, top floor of the Perry block.

It must be done to-morrow night. If anything scares these chaps, it'll be all day with our plans."

"To-morrow then," said Bennett. "Be here at 10 o'clock sharp, and we can arrange the details then. I'll take care of Godfrey during the day, and you keep out of sight. Now skip out and go to bed," he added. "We need a rest before tackling this job. Oh, by the way," he concluded, "bring a gun with you."

The cuckoo-clock on Bennett's mantel cackled the hour of 2, as Davis left the apartment.

At a quarter-past-twelve Fawcett, the city-editor, sat lolling in his spring-chair, having one of those little breathing-spells that come so rarely to the city man on a morning paper. A sudden, almost cyclonic, rush into the local room brought Fawcett up standing in an instant. The new arrival was Bennett. Blood was trickling from a long scratch on his face, and his clothing gave evidence that he was fresh from an encounter.

"What is it, Bennett?" asked the city editor, scenting a sensation.

"Got 'em," answered the other briefly, grasping a tab of paper. "Got the leader of the gang like a rat in a trap. *It's Godfrey. We've tied him up, and Davis is standing guard over him with a gun.*"

"What!!!!" shrieked Fawcett, and then recovering himself—"Great Scott!! hot stuff, old man. Get right at it."

Bennett's pencil began to fly over the paper.

"The gang of counterfeiters whose shrewdness has proven too much for the best detectives in the country," he wrote, "have at last been run to earth. The details of the capture, and the events leading up to it, furnish one of the most remarkable pages in criminal history——"

The rest of the story was never written. The half-covered page of copy was torn from Bennett's hand. He looked up angrily, for time was short. There, ghastly pale, and shaking from head to foot, stood Davis.

"Come out, quick," he gasped, and Bennett rushed after him to the elevator. They entered the car just as Fawcett called loudly to Bennett to rush up his copy.

"In heaven's name, what's the matter?" asked Bennett excitedly, but Davis only gasped for breath, and pulled the other out of the lift toward the street door. Once in the street, he spoke.

"Jack, you must not write that story. I—I've let the fellow go."

"You!!!!"

"I've let him go, I tell you. For God's sake, don't write the story, Jack. It's my story, by ——, and you sha'n't write it," as Bennett hesitated before replying. "I'll tell you why. After we tied the fellow up, and you came down here to write the story, I saw a girl's picture on the table. I believe my blood almost froze in my veins as I looked at it, for the picture was of *her. It was Dolly's photograph.* D— it, don't you see, the man's her brother, the scapegrace, the vagabond, the——"

Bennett was undergoing a struggle, a terrible struggle. If he wrote the story, he would deserve to be kicked all the way to the Pacific coast; if he didn't write it, he would certainly be kicked out of the office. It was Davis who got the story. He knew that well. Yet the paper would never recognize such an excuse. The faces of the twain shone white in the light of the street-lamp. The younger one was watching his companion eagerly.

"You won't write it, Jack," he begged almost piteously.

"No, old chap, I won't. Not if the whole press of the country turns its back on me. Come, youngster, we've got to shake this town. It's too hot to hold us."

At daybreak next morning two unkempt fellows boarded a Chicago train at a way-station, ten miles from Kansas City. The morning paper contained a garbled story about a capture and a daring escape, but the only two men who knew the inside of the affair

were speeding eastward as fast as steam could carry them. The whole affair was a great sensation in newspaper circles, and there were a good many theories evolved to account for the extraordinary behavior of certain absentees. Bribery was freely hinted, but there were those who knew that something more than mere money had prompted Bennett to throw up the biggest beat of the year. Little Priest swore pompously that he would black-list both the men in every newspaper-office in America, but, despite the threat, Bennett is now one of the most valued men in New York, while little Davis has grown into a big strapping fellow. He is the sporting editor of a Chicago daily, and his wife is a pretty little girl whose name was once Dolly Taylor, and her residence Omaha.

It is said by those who have had much experience in the matter that no two men express themselves alike on the interesting subject of love, especially when they are making a personal matter of it. Here is a new contribution to this discussion, from the pen of "Etincelle," translated for ROMANCE by Edith Duff.

THE PROPOSAL.

WHY was it that, on entering the great Empire *salon*, where for many springs, and alas!—for many winters, too, the Duchess de la Sambre had reigned, Gaston de Lauzun's heart should have so palpitated?

Because he had recognized Madame de Méré, sitting on a sofa near the fireplace. There, in her velvet gown embroidered in bright blue, with a hat as big as one's hand perched on her golden hair, sat the lady, stately as a swan. That was why his heart beat, and why for months past whenever he saw Gertrude de la Méré, he had been filled with emotion. He loved everything about her, from her capricious, imaginative conversation, touching lightly first on this, then on that, to the curious mixture which she presented of physical languor and intelligent alertness.

Why did people like her, why did she shine and dazzle when other women were passed indifferently? No one ever tried to explain the enigma, nor did M. de Lauzun,—any more than he did the philosophers and moralists from whom he read every day.

In spite of his name, M. de Lauzun was not a soldier. He was a handsome man; but his beauty was quiet, and clear-cut, of a sort to ward off rather than attract as do faces expressing each passing thought, which are more mobile though less perfect. Gaston was twenty-seven years old, but he still preserved a schoolboy's credulity and bashfulness. After Saint-Cyr and Tonkin he had not yet become a duelist. Three years at Tonkin and a serious wound, not to speak of fevers, had shown his allegiance to his country. Then, yield-

ing to the wishes of his mother, he gave his commission to the second son, his brother Antoine, who had quitted Saint-Cyr for Africa. Then Marquis Gaston de Lauzun returned to Paris, "to dream," according to the expression of Madame de la Méré, about whom he had indeed dreamed. He appeared in society, moving about with a resigned, haughty air, in the midst of the gayest surroundings. But sometimes in a chance conversation he would give one a glimpse at his truly cultivated mind and ready tongue. His great blue eyes were often compared to those of Louis XV., the much beloved king.

Madame de Méré, bored by the old Duchess de la Sambre, finally rose and took her leave without one word to the marquis. The parlors were filled with people, and Gaston easily slipped away and followed the young lady. All out of breath he finally caught up with her just as the footman was about to open the hall door.

"Ah, are you leaving also?" she inquired, recognizing the young Marquis. "Are you already tired? Whenever I see old Ledaim, I am seized with a frantic desire to escape. I see you are of the same mind."

Gaston had not even seen the old man, an ever ready candidate for the Academy and a perpetual protégé of the Duchess. Nevertheless, he quickly replied, "Yes, he was just entering——"

"Oh, look at the rain," interrupted Gertrude, "it is coming down in torrents! *Au revoir*, Monsieur de Lauzun,—shall I see you at the opera this evening?"

She sprang into her carriage, and her velvet gown, her blonde hair, all, were a second later out of sight. Gaston, petrified, stood still in the rain, repeating her words in astonishment—"this evening at the opera!" At the opera for a quarter-of-an-hour he would be at her side; perhaps he could whisper a word in her ear, in that little ear, so daintily pink.

About half-after eight Gaston looked into the opera-house. The empty theatre began slowly to be filled. The regular attendants appeared one by one. The

reserved seats looked like a jeweler's show case, with all sorts of precious stones glittering in fine array on necks and shoulders.

An elegant old man, with a decided liking for widows, entered his box, escorting a lady in a rose-colored gown. She was stout, and her blonde hair was almost hidden by roses. Behind her was an elderly lady, whose frightful red hair was adorned with a diamond tiara and whose whole appearance reminded one of a mummy.

Seated near by was another enormous woman. She had strings of brilliant emeralds around her fat neck. With her was a pretty young girl, followed by a gentleman bedizened with a glittering cross, and said to be the thirty-first suitor of the pretty young girl—with a million.

About ten o'clock, in a box near that of the Princess de S—— appeared a pink cloud, followed by an old general with white whiskers—the father of Madame de Méré. The pink cloud resolved itself into a young woman, on whose blonde hair a single diamond dragon-fly trembled, and from whose white, superbly curved shoulders, a pink gown fell in Grecian folds. Gaston, entranced by this apparition, was finally brought to life by a little smile of recognition. He could hardly wait for the curtain to fall and give him an opportunity to enter the General's box. There, beside the pink-robed goddess and her father, was a visitor in whom Gaston recognized Charles des Ecarts, a Parisian on the shady side of fifty, one who had burned the candle at both ends, and once seen could never be forgotten. Who else ever had such mocking eyes, separated by a long, hooked nose, and two such patches of grayish red hair on such a round, bald head. Those two patches, like Hercules' columns, seemed to say to any fresh hair which might further ornament this cranium, "You shall go no farther."

"O, it is Gaston!" exclaimed Ecarts, cordially extending his hand to the marquis.

After an exchange of greetings, Gaston heard Mme.

de Méré say, "I was just remarking to M. des Ecarts that this music is made for deaf people."

"Why do you say for the deaf?"

"Because no one hears it."

"Pardon me, but I do not agree with you," replied Ecarts. "One cannot help hearing it. The cymbals clash like cannon, and the big drums roll like thunder. In such discord, melody is lost. If madame will permit, I shall leave for awhile."

"You wish to go?"

"Yes, I would like to breathe the perfumed air of the boulevard for a moment."

"I will go with you," said the general.

Poor, timid Lauzun was already on his feet. "I shall keep you, Monsieur de Lauzun," said Gertrude. And while he nervously reseated himself, the door closed. He opened his mouth and tried to speak, but his heart palpitated and his breath came so hard that he dared not trust his voice. She was quietly scanning the boxes.

"Do you know that lady in the pale blue dress?" she finally asked.

"Where is she?"

"There, that one—she looks like a Russian. How superb she is!"

Gaston blushed to the roots of his hair. It was the Countess Tra las Montès. He knew her only by name. She was a stranger to the city, and one not admitted to the best circles.

"Yes, that is to say—— No,—she is a Spaniard."

"Ah, you are very funny," said Gertrude laughing. "It is all the same to me whether you know her or not. Don't worry yourself, Monsieur de Lauzun.—What do you think of the new minister's wife?"

"Indeed, Madame, I am not prepared to say. I think the same as you do."

"I ask your own opinion, not mine."

"How can one have an opinion of a new-comer!"

"Not even when she dresses better than the Marquise de Beloeil!" exclaimed Gertrude. "Is it true

she was the most beautiful woman at the dinner given to the Grand Duchess?"

"Since you were not there—"

"Nonsense! it is mean in you to pay me compliments. Keep them. The Grand Duchess is very witty, is she not?"

"People have told me so, Madame."

"Yes?—and Meilhac?"

"Is he witty?"

"Now you are teasing me, Monsieur."

"No indeed, Madame,—but why do you speak of Meilhac?"

"For politeness' sake, because you write."

"Oh, but not the same kind of literature that he writes."

"Certainly not. Meilhac is simply amusing, and you are——"

"Tedious!"

"Not at all. Best of all, I like the notes at the end. The suggestions in reference to dress, and furnishing. And as for your 'Study of Saint-Clotilde,' it is beautiful."

Gaston gasped. The Spanish lady, the new minister's wife, the Grand-Duchess, Meilhac, his Study,—all were so far from the subject of his thoughts. Minute by minute he was losing ground. The general would soon return and he had not yet said "I love you." The words would not take long to pronounce. And nevertheless— Impossible! She was again beginning questions by fits and starts. He took no notice of them. Sadly, with eyes glued to the carpet, he felt as though he would weep. Oh, it was ridiculous! Only the most inane words would rise to his lips, when he was thinking solely of those he could not utter.

"You look sad, Monsieur. Are you thinking of getting married?"

"Getting married!"— It was an open sesame for his triumphant response, "I, married! O no, never, for I love distractedly a woman who, a woman that"— But poor Gaston did not make this reply. The General entered the box! Innocently enough, this good warrior

asked a question which was pure irony to Gaston: "Have you two been making love while I've been away?"

The marquis, absolutely and entirely confused, rose, saying that he was anxious to leave. And while he was hurriedly getting into his overcoat, he kept repeating. "I shall never dare, no, never."

"You go already!" said Ecarts. "Let us walk over to the club. It is not eleven o'clock yet."

"Willingly."

While on the way, Gaston collected himself, and, put at ease by M. des Ecarts, he concluded to consult him on the subject.

"You who have lived in the true sense of living, Charles, how did you ever propose to a woman?"

"How?"

"Yes."

"Do you think I ever proposed to any girl? I only wanted them to have a good opinion of me. If you would follow my advice, I would have you waltz with them when you are young, dine with them when you are old, and talk with them at all ages, if you care to. That is all I have ever done, and I advise you to do the same."

"But if one should fall in love."

"I ignore that malady, Gaston. There is Sangdor, a Don Juan millionaire. Perhaps he has the secret. Sangdor," said Ecarts, taking the old beau by the arm, "when you loved a woman, how did you propose to her?"

"When I *loved?* You mean to say when I *love.* I beg you to remember I have not yet renounced all the joys of this world. But I am beginning to get a little weary of this sort of thing. At my age it is tiresome."

"Well," replied Ecarts, "I see we are pretty well agreed. Let us leave de Lauzun to his happy dreams. Good night."

"Good night, Charles."

Gaston was going out when the old Count de Loyauté barred his way.

"What ails you to-night, Gaston? You look as if you

had lost your last friend. Have a game of bésique with me. That will divert you a little."

They seated themselves at a little table, and while shuffling the cards the old man said, "You ought to marry, my young friend. You weary yourself."

"I should weary myself more if I were married—"

"O, one little woman, all your very own. It is superb—"

"Ah, you have been in love sometime during your life."

"Have I been in love?—Why, my dear boy, at the least count—three times. The first, when I was seventeen, and like a cherub, I was in love with my godmother—"

"How did you tell her?" interrupted Gaston, showing attention in every feature.

"I didn't *tell* her—I wrote. My letter was an incendiary bomb, warranted to set a thousand maidens' hearts on fire!"

"Well?"

"Well, the next day I received a huge package, containing a Jack in the Box, grinning at me. That was the sole response of my cruel godmother."

"And the second time?"

"The second time was when I was a lieutenant. My colonel's wife turned my head at a ball——"

"You proposed to *her!*"

"No. I composed a declaration. I repeated it like a prayer every morning and every night. I was to call on my idol on a certain day, and I swore to myself, cost what it might, I would throw myself at her feet and reveal all,—when an order from the minister recalled me immediately to Paris. I had to start that very evening."

"And the third."

"Oh, the third! My greatest desires were fulfilled. She was adorable, full of grace, wit, and beauty. I do not know why I, a poor obscure youth, should merit her love—except that I loved her to desperation——"

"You dared to propose to her?"

"I! I would rather have died than open my mouth. I offered her my hand through my mother, for happily she was a widow—and she is—Madame de Loyauté!"

"There, you have won," ejaculated Gaston, "I play too badly to-night. Farewell."

"Oh," thought he, "did no one ever love as I love Madame de Méré? Is it then so rare? To write to her—that would be stupid. Will no one tell me what I ought to do?" He saw emerging from the Vaudeville the tall figure of Michel Tournefort, the playwright. He crossed over and walking up to him said, "How does the new piece go?"

"A house of cards! it cannot stand."

"What is it about?"

"Oh, a love-story,—an old plot, no sense, no logic."

"Don't you think it would be more original to write a comedy and leave love out?"

"Without doubt—I believe it would. Love and sentiment are two different things. Sentiment is an instinct, and of all human feelings the grandest."

"Assuredly, and then love in the theatre is purely conventional."

"Entirely."

"And the proposal, that truly great and classic scene, does not exist in real life?"

"Not at all."

Gaston, thinking only of Mme. de Méré, was touching the solution of the problem. "I am sure a man of your mind would never make a declaration."

"I guess not. If a woman pleased me, I should ask her at once."

"Would she consent."

"If she didn't, I would leave her. Oh, I would make quick work."

"If a woman pleased him, he would ask her at once." Poor Gaston had grasped and closed his hand on nothing. He was as far off from the truth of the question as before. He thought Tournefort's opinion ridiculous. The next day, however, urged by an inexplicable force, he presented himself at Gertrude's at five o'clock.

Laughs, whispers, interrupted music, little cups of tea, crystal and silver, all harmonizing with the smart frocks,—all the flutter announced to the ears of the Marquis, "Five o'clock tea."

Madame de Méré, absorbed by her duties as hostess, accorded him apparently slight attention.

Seated on a low chair behind a palm, the unfortunate Gaston remained an interminable time. At length he heard these words whispered to Gertrude by a lady. "What has become of M. de Lauzun?"

"I do not know. He returned a dreamer to Paris, but now he has turned sleeper. Don't let us waken him."

The last visitor had left, the door closed, the clock chimed half-after-seven.

"Well, monsieur," said she, standing before the young man, "if you are as economical in all things as in words, you ought to be very rich."

"O, madame, pardon! Oh, yes, I dreamed, I believe." He had risen.

"Perhaps I invited you to dinner!"

"No, madame, I had not that honor."

Mme. de Méré now seated herself, while he stood, gazing at her. She was clothed in a long silvery gown, and was more beautiful than ever.

"The world is stupid, after all," said she. "There are times when one is tired of it all. Oh, look at that glittering thing on the carpet! It must be a bouquet-holder which some one has let fall."

Gaston was quickly on his knees at the place to which the little foot, shod in a black satin slipper, pointed. There he found himself near her, looking into her face, fascinated by her charming eyes. He moved nearer and taking her little hands, he bowed his head over them, murmuring, "O, Gertrude, if you only knew. I——"

"Say no more, nothing, my friend," said she, laying her fair head on Gaston's shoulder, thus rendering him blissfully happy. "I know it—I knew it from the first day you saw me!"

Among all of Rudyard Kipling's remarkable stories of the East, none is more amusing than the following:

HIS WEDDED WIFE.

SHAKESPEARE says something about worms, or it may be giants or beetles, turning if you tread on them too severely. The safest plan is never to tread on a worm —not even on the last new subaltern from home, with his buttons hardly out of their tissue paper and the red of sappy English beef in his cheeks. This is the story of the worm that turned. For the sake of brevity we will call Henry Augustus Ramsay Faizanne "The Worm," although he really was an exceedingly pretty boy, without a hair on his face and with a waist like a girl's, when he came out to the Second "Shikarris" and was made unhappy in several ways. The "Shikarris" are a high caste regiment, and you must be able to do things well—play a banjo, or ride more than a little, or sing, or act—to get on with them.

The Worm did nothing except fall off his pony and knock chips out of gate posts with his trap. Even that became monotonous after a time. He objected to whist, cut the cloth at billiards, sang out of tune, kept very much to himself and wrote to his mamma and sisters at home. Four of these five things were vices which the "Shikarris" objected to and set themselves to eradicate. Every one knows how subalterns are, by brother subalterns, softened and not permitted to be ferocious. It is good and wholesome and does no one any harm unless tempers are lost; and then there is trouble. There was a man once—but that is another story.

The "Shikarris" shikarred The Worm very much, and he bore everything without winking. He was so good and so anxious to learn, and flushed so pink that his education was cut short and he was left to his own devices by every one except the senior subaltern, who

continued to make life a burden to The Worm. The senior subaltern meant no harm, but his chaff was coarse, and he didn't quite understand where to stop. He had been waiting too long for his company, and that always sours a man. Also, he was in love, which made him worse.

One day, after he bad borrowed The Worm's trap for a lady who never existed, had used it himself all the afternoon, had sent a note to The Worm, purporting to come from the lady, and was telling the mess all about it, The Worm rose in his place and said, in his quiet, lady-like voice: "That was a very pretty sell; but I'll lay you a month's pay to a month's pay when you get your step that I work a sell on you that you'll remember for the rest of your days, and the regiment after you when you're dead or broke." The Worm wasn't angry in the least, and the rest of the mess shouted. Then the senior subaltern looked at The Worm from the boots upward and down again, and said: "Done, Baby." The Worm took the rest of the mess to witness that the bet had been taken and retired into a book with a sweet smile.

Two months passed and the senior subaltern still educated The Worm, who began to move about a little more as the hot weather came on. I have said that the senior subaltern was in love. The curious thing is that a girl was in love with the senior subaltern. Though the colonel said awful things, and the major snorted, and married captains looked unutterable wisdom, and the juniors scoffed, those two were engaged.

The senior subaltern was so pleased with getting his company and his acceptance at the same time that he forgot to bother The Worm. The girl was a pretty girl and had money of her own. She does not come into this story at all.

One night at beginning of the hot weather all the mess except The Worm, who had gone to his own room to write home letters, were sitting on the platform outside the mess house. The band had finished playing, but no one wanted to go in. And the captains' wives

were there also. The folly of a man in love is unlimited. The senior subaltern had been holding forth on the merits of the girl he was engaged to, and the ladies were purring approval, while the men yawned, when there was a rustle of skirts in the dark and a tired, faint voice lifted itself:

"Where's my husband?"

I do not wish in the least to reflect on the morality of the "Shikarris," but it is on record that four men jumped up as if they had been shot. Three of them were married men. Perhaps they were afraid that their wives had come from home unbeknownst. The fourth said that he had acted on the impulse of the moment. He explained this afterward.

Then the voice cried: "Oh, Lionel!" Lionel was the senior subaltern's name. A woman came into the little circle of light by the candles on the peg tables, stretching out her hands to the dark where the senior subaltern was and sobbing. We rose to our feet, feeling that things were going to happen and ready to believe the worst. In this bad, small world of ours one knows so little of the life of the next man, which after all is entirely his own concern, that one is not surprised when a crash comes.

Anything might turn up any day for any one. Perhaps the senior subaltern had been trapped in his youth. Men are crippled that way occasionally. We didn't know; we wanted to hear, and the captains' wives were as anxious as we. If he had been trapped, he was to be excused, for the woman from nowhere, in the dusty shoes and gray traveling dress, was very lovely, with black hair and great eyes full of tears. She was tall, with a fine figure, and her voice had a running sob in it pitiful to hear. As soon as the senior subaltern stood up, she threw her arms round his neck and called him "my darling," and said she could not bear waiting alone in England, and his letters were so short and cold and she was his to the end of the world, and would he forgive her? This did not sound quite like a lady's way of speaking. It was too demonstrative.

Things seemed black indeed, and the captains' wives peered under their eyebrows at the senior subaltern, and the colonel's face set like the day of judgment framed in gray bristles, and no one spoke for a while.

Next the colonel said very shortly: "Well, sir?" and the woman sobbed afresh. The senior subaltern was half choked with the arms round his neck, but he gasped out: "It's a d—d lie! I never had a wife in my life!" "Don't swear," said the colonel. "Come into the mess. We must sift this clear somehow," and he sighed to himself, for he believed in his "Shikarris," did the colonel.

We trooped into the ante-room, under the full lights, and there we saw how beautiful the woman was. She stood up in the middle of us all, sometimes choking with crying, then hard and proud, and then holding out her arms to the senior subaltern. It was like the fourth act of a tragedy. She told us how the senior subaltern had married her when he was home on leave eighteen months before; and she seemed to know all that we knew, and more too, of his people and his past life. He was white and ashy gray, trying now and again to break into the torrent of her words; and we, noting how lovely she was and what a criminal he looked, esteemed him a beast of the worst kind. We felt sorry for him, though.

I shall never forget the indictment of the senior subaltern by his wife. Nor will he. It was so sudden, rushing out of the dark, unannounced, into our dull lives. The captains' wives stood back, but their eyes were alight, and you could see that they had already convicted and sentenced the senior subaltern. The colonel seemed five years older. One major was shading his eyes with his hand and watching the woman from underneath it. Another was chewing his mustache and smiling quietly, as if he were witnessing a play. Full in the open space in the center by the whist-tables the senior subaltern's terrier was hunting for fleas. I remember all this as clearly as though a photograph were in my hand. I remember the look of

horror on the senior subaltern's face. It was rather like seeing a man hanged, but much more interesting. Finally the woman wound up by saying that the senior subaltern carried a double F. M. in tattoo on his left shoulder. We all knew that, and to our innocent minds it seemed to clinch the matter. But one of the bachelor majors said very politely: "I presume that your marriage certificate would be more to the purpose?"

That roused the woman. She stood up and sneered at the senior subaltern for a cur and abused the major and the colonel and all the rest. Then she wept and then she pulled a paper from her breast, saying imperially: "Take that! And let my husband—my lawfully wedded husband—read it aloud if he dare!"

There was a hush and the men looked into each other's eyes as the senior subaltern came forward in a dazed and dizzy way and took the paper. We were wondering, as we stared, whether there was anything against any one of us that might turn up later on. The senior subaltern's throat was dry; but, as he ran his eye over the paper, he broke out into a hoarse cackle of relief and said to the woman: "You young blackguard!"

But the woman had fled through a door, and on the paper was written: "This is to certify that I, The Worm, have paid in full my debts to the senior subaltern, and further, that the senior subaltern is my debtor, by agreement on the 23d of February, as by the mess attested, to the extent of one month's captain's pay, in the lawful currency of the India empire."

Then a deputation set off for The Worm's quarters and found him, betwixt and between, unlacing his stays, with the hat, wig, serge dress, etc., on the bed. He came over as he was, and the "Shikarris" shouted till the gunners' mess sent over to know if they might have a share of the fun. I think we were all, except the colonel and the senior subaltern, a little disappointed that the scandal had come to nothing. But that is human nature. There could be no two words

about The Worm's acting. It leaned as near to a nasty tragedy as anything this side of a joke can.

When most of the subalterns sat upon him with sofa cushions to find out why he had not said that acting was his strong point, he answered very quietly. "I don't think you ever asked me. I used to act at home with my sisters." But no acting with girls could account for The Worm's display that night. Personally I think it was in bad taste, besides being dangerous. There is no sort of use in playing with fire, even for fun.

The "Shikarris" made him president of the regimental dramatic club, and when the senior subaltern paid up his debt, which he did at once, The Worm sank the money in scenery and dresses. He was a good Worm, and the "Shikarris" are proud of him. The only drawback is that he has been christened "Mrs. Senior Subaltern," and as there are now two Mrs. Senior Subalterns in the station, this is sometimes confusing to strangers.

One can readily understand the terror which this mysterious vessel inspired in the breasts of its enemies. Its strange career was described by Emile Souvestre, and the story has been translated for ROMANCE by L. B. Fletcher.

THE NORWEGIAN BRIG.

IT was during the Empire, when Napoleon was knocking the kings right and left. The Englishmen had blockaded all our ports, and privateering was almost impossible, for a cruise was pretty sure to come to an end in the Plymouth prison.

So nearly all the French ships lay sunning themselves at their moorings, like so many rotten old hulks.

But a few gallant fellows were still cruising on the high seas, and giving the Englishmen an occasional shot by way of revenge and in order to keep in practice. One of these was Captain Kerkof, a true Breton, hard-featured and swarthy; stiff as a handspike, thirsty as a cook and jolly as a midshipman.

He was a good Christian withal, for he never failed to have mass said on leaving port and had given one of his richest prizes to the chapel of St. Barbe—all of which did not prevent his being leader of a crew of sharks and the greatest scoundrel of the lot.

Kerkof, then, in spite of the Englishmen, was roaming the North Sea in his pretty schooner, the *Sans Quartier*, with his eye on the wind and his hands in his own pockets, in default of others.

It was a day of dense fog and the horizon was shadowy, but suddenly the captain saw the ghostly form of a brig cleaving the fog and standing on a course nearly parallel to his own.

At the same moment the lookout cried: "Sail on the starboard quarter!"

"What fool of a skipper dares come within gunshot of the *Sans Quartier?*" roared Kerkof. "If he's an Englishman, we'll give him a trip to France for the

good of his health. Come, my lads, clear the decks! Crowd all sail and send the stranger our card, for we privateers must be polite, above all else."

The next instant a ball from one of the schooner's guns plunged through the fog and pierced the rigging of the mysterious brig.

There was a moment of suspense, but the stranger had evidently understood this polite invitation to show her colors, for a small English flag soon ran up a halyard and fluttered at the brig's peak.

"Good!" cried Kerkof, calmly filling his pipe.

"To your guns, my lads, but don't fire until I give the word."

The *Sans Quartier* changed her course slightly and bore down upon her prey with outspread wings, like a cormorant.

The situation of the brig seemed desperate, as the point for which she was making would evidently be reached by the *Sans Quartier* at the same time, so that the stranger was running straight into the range of her formidable adversary's guns.

She kept on her course, however, and as she grew more distinct, an expression of wonder overspread the faces of Kerkof and his crew.

"What kind of a ship is that?" said the captain.

"Did you ever see such a rig, my lads? She doesn't carry sail enough to cross a mill-pond in a week, you'd say, but there she goes—making a good twelve knots before our eyes! I'll be hanged if I can understand it."

The crew answered only by nods and oaths and the like symptoms of surprise and terror.

But the preparations for attack went on, and the gunners stood at their posts with lighted matches.

"Attention!" suddenly cried Kerkof, springing into the nettings. "Ship or shadow, we'll send a volley into her. Now we're in line. Ready, my men? Fire!"

A terrible detonation shook every timber of the *Sans Quartier*.

When the smoke cleared away, the men gazed in

amazement at the spot where the brig had been. She had vanished!

"Sunk!" cried a dozen voices.

"Silence, fools!" roared Kerkof.

With an air of stupefaction he scanned the sea in all directions. All eyes followed his, and soon there rose a chorus of oaths, for the brig, dimly seen through the fog, was scudding away, *far to larboard and with all sails furled!*

"Fire again!" cried Kerkof, in a hoarse, unnatural voice.

The second broadside was given with less precision than the first, for the strange sight had lured some of the gunners from their posts.

The brig was too far away to be affected by the ragged volley, and was soon lost to sight in the fog.

Kerkof, leaning against the nettings, was still staring in amazement at the spot where she had vanished when the boatswain's voice roused him from his stupor.

"Captain!"

"Well?"

"Captain, did you see that brig?"

"Of course I did, you idiot!"

"Well, captain, may the Devil fly away with me if she isn't the very one we sunk in the Channel a year ago this blessed day."

"What!"

"Yes, captain, a year ago to-day. It was Good Friday, you know. Perhaps the crew were not prepared for death and they have come back to ask our prayers for the repose of their souls."

"You are an infernal fool!"

"Well, maybe I am, captain." The old sailor retired, slowly shaking his head, and Kerkof resumed his revery.

The sun went down, and the privateer kept on her course with a favoring wind.

Suddenly the men, who had been discussing the strange occurrence, set up a great shout.

Kerkof raised his head and recoiled in astonishment.

Close on the port bow stood the strange brig, with all

sails furled, but keeping even pace with the schooner. A torrent of smoke and flame poured from a great black cylinder amidships.

"The brig!" gasped a voice near Kerkof.

"Brig or Devil, to your guns and fire!"

The terrible brig seemed to have heard this hoarse and broken command, for she bounded forward, crossed the schooner's bows and soon disappeared to starboard.

She passed so close to the *Sans Quartier* that the roaring of the flames was heard, and through the portholes was seen a fiercely blazing fire, with fantastic human figures moving about in its ruddy light.

Not a word was spoken aboard the Frenchman. The crew fell on their knees. For full ten minutes Kerkof knelt, with head bared and his rosary in his hands.

Several days later the *Sans Quartier* made Breton port. Kerkof and his crew never knew what had frightened them so badly, but about this time the English newspapers announced the arrival at London of a steamboat hailing from Norway.

This was the first vessel propelled by steam that had traversed those waters.